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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

**A Study and Translation of
Harry Mulisch's "Inspection"**

by Gerda Hoogenboom

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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ABSTRACT

This study contains an analysis and a translation of a story by the Dutch author Harry Mulisch, "Keuring" which translates into English as "Inspection," a story which was first published in 1955 and appeared again in 1957 in the collection of stories titled De Versierde Mens [The Decorated Man]. It wants to establish that this particular story forms an excellent introduction to the works of this celebrated author since it incorporates most of the themes and motifs found in his longer works. Translating this story was an interesting and very challenging undertaking for many reasons, which are outlined in the third part of this study, the first and second part being an introduction to the author and his works, a short analysis of "Inspection" and the actual translation of the story.

Harry Mulisch won national fame with his 1952 novel archibald strohalm and his works were introduced to the anglophone part of the world by the translation in 1962 of his novel Het Stenen Bruidsbed [The Stone Bridal Bed]. Two other novels have also been translated into English, but the author has so far received very little critical attention outside his own country. Nationally, however, his works are very highly regarded. No study has yet been written on "Inspection," but this is not due to lack of quality in the story.

The translation of "Inspection" found in this study was made for a metaliterary purpose, i.e. to introduce a story by a well-known Dutch author to a mainly academic audience, and therefore, for various reasons outlined in the third chapter, not suitable as a target text for general publication. The third chapter also wants to give some insight into the strategies employed both in making a metaliterary translation with emphasis on the source text, like the

present translation, and in adapting the target text to accommodate the poetics, current taste and preferences of a more general target audience.

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INTRODUCTION

This study contains an analysis and a translation of a story by the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch, "Keuring" which translates into English as "Inspection," a story which was first published in 1955 and appeared again in 1957 in the collection of stories titled De Versierde Mens [The Decorated Man]:¹ It will attempt to establish that this particular story forms an excellent introduction to the works of this celebrated author since it incorporates most of the themes and motifs found in his longer works. To make a translation of this story is an interesting and very challenging undertaking for many reasons, which will be outlined in the third part of this thesis, the first and second part being an introduction to and the actual translation of the story.

Harry Mulisch won national fame with his 1952 novel archibald strohalm and his works were introduced internationally by the translation in 1962 of his novel The Stone Bridal Bed.² "Inspection" falls chronologically between these two novels. It was written during a period when Mulisch was very interested in the occult and immediately after this period, his first autobiography ("autophilosophy" might be a more applicable name for this work, since it deals with his life only where it relates to his creative writing) Food for Psycholo-

¹ "Keuring" in Libertinage (1955) and De Versierde Mens, 10th ed. (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1972): 7-53. Republished in De Verhalen 1947-1977, 2 ed. (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1981): 125-74. All notes, translations and abbreviations between square brackets [] found in this study are by G. H.

² Mulisch, Harry, archibald strohalm [the protagonist's name, not capitalized: strohalm meaning "straw" as in "clutching at a straw"], 1952 (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1983). Quotations from this novel were translated from the Dutch by G.H. Het Stenen Bruidsbéd (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1959), translated by Adrienne Dixon, The Stone Bridal Bed (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1962).

gists appeared.³ In this book he gives some indication of the importance the collection The Decorated Man had for him:

Astonished and numb, I noticed suddenly that I had become 'great'. [...] The metamorphosis had reached a definite stage. While usually after one month I already feel revolted by my own products [...] I can hardly read ["A City in the Sun"] without getting tears in my eyes. Shortly after I saw the same in "What happened to Sergeant Masuro?" and in "The Decorated Man".⁴

And now? What do I want to 'express' with my work? The elementary movement? I don't know anymore--I only know that I only just write now (Food for Psychologists, 37-38).

Both "What happened to Sergeant Masuro?" and "The Decorated Man" have received more critical attention than "Inspection" (there is not one study dedicated to the latter story), but this study wants to show that this fact is not due to the inherent quality of the story. Although its material is equally fantastic and its theme is similar to that of the other stories in the collection, the latter story comes closer to the quality and complexity of the later novels which brought this writer some of the international recognition he deserves.

The translation of "Inspection" found in this study was made for a metaliterary purpose, i.e. to introduce a story by a well-known Dutch author to a mainly academic audience, and therefore, for various reasons outlined in the "Translator's Notes" not suitable as a target text for general publication. The third part of this study wants to give some insight into the strategies

³ Mulisch, Harry, Voer voor Psychologen [Food for Psychologists], 9th ed. (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1965). All quotations from Food for Psychologists were translated from the Dutch by G.H.

⁴ "Wat gebeurde er met sergeant Massuro?" and "De Versierde Mens" are two short stories from the collection De Versierde Mens, both translated into English. "What happened to Sergeant Masuro?" trans. Roy Edwards, Short Stories International (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969): 272-90. "The Decorated Man," trans. Adrienne Dixon, Writing in Holland and Flanders 33 (1973): 21-23. "Een stad in de Zon" ["A City in the Sun"], De Versierde Mens, 195-219. Translations by G.H.

employed both in making a metaliterary translation with emphasis on the source text, like the present translation, and in adapting the target text to accommodate the poetics, current taste and preferences of a more general target audience.

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF HARRY MULISCH

Harry Kurt Viktor Mulisch was born in Haarlem on July 29, 1927, to an Austrian father, Karl Viktor Kurt Mulisch, continuously referred to by Mulisch as K. V. K., and a Jewish mother, Alice Schwartz, who was only eighteen years old at the time of his birth. His parents were both native speakers of German, but Harry was raised in Dutch, learning German well enough, however, to be able in 1977 to write the libretto for the opera Axel in German. When he was nine years old his parents were divorced and his mother went to live in Amsterdam. Mulisch was raised mainly by the housekeeper, Frieda, who had "come with the house" when his father acquired it.

The Second World War disrupted Mulisch's education, for during the last winter of the war all schools in occupied Holland were closed. He had not gone to school regularly before the closure and never went back afterwards, thus thwarting his childhood dream of becoming a famous chemist (when 15 years old, he had written a book titled Moderne Atoomtheorie voor Iedereen [Modern Nuclear Theory for Everybody]). His interest in chemistry and alchemy remained alive, however, and after the war he added to this a fascination with the occult.

The Mulisch family suffered few discomforts from the German occupation (except for food-shortages during the Hunger Winter), since the high position which Karl Mulisch occupied with the German company Lippmann-Rosenthal and Company (a bank into which Jewish people about to be deported were forced

⁵ For more biographical information see: Brouwers, Jeroen, ed., Harry Mulisch (Brussel, Den Haag: Manteau, 1976) and Dütting, Hans, ed., Kritisch Nabeeld [Critical Recaps] (Baarn: Ambo, 1982). Also: Gregoor, Nol, In Gesprek met Harry Mulisch [Talking to Harry Mulisch] (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1965). Quotations from these works were translated from the Dutch by G.H.

to deposit their possessions) secured them a relatively undisturbed life and kept his mother out of the concentration camps while several of her relatives died in the gas chambers. Immediately after the war, however, Karl Mulisch was arrested and jailed for three years for his work during the war and Harry Mulisch had to sell most of his family's possessions to be able to pay for food.

Mulisch's uncommon situation during the war--son of a Jewish mother, a potential victim, and an Austrian father who worked with the Germans, a potential [or real?] criminal--has had a great effect on Mulisch's themes.

About growing up during the war he writes in Food for Psychologists

One's world view is shaped between the ages of 12 and 17. [...] in my case this period coincided exactly with the war. [...] For who grew up in an occupied country was not shaped so much in a world of destruction, but in a world which in the midst of destruction hoped for a liberation, could see and experience it (Food for Psychologists, 32).

About the influence this duality of hate and hope had on his works he said three years later: "One will always find destruction in my work, but within that always something that radiates life" (Gregoor, 106).

In 1951, Mulisch's mother emigrated to the United States. His impoverished father died in 1957. In the same year Mulisch moved from Haarlem to Amsterdam, and has lived there ever since. He married in 1971 and has two daughters, Anna and Frieda. Mulisch made his living alternately as an actor, office clerk, opera-singer, and eventually as a full-time writer after the success of his second novel, Het Zwarte Licht [The Black Light] in 1956.⁶

His first publication was a short story "De Kamer" ["The Room"] in 1947. His first novel archibald strohalm won an award, and started in earnest his career as a writer. In all he has now published 9 books of poetry, 9 novels,

⁶ Het Zwarte Licht, Bulkboek 66 (Utrecht: Patty & Theo Knippenberg, 1978).

10 books of stories, 7 plays (one in cooperation with other writers), and 20 other works of studies, reportage and autobiographies and received five prestigious literary awards.

Mulisch has become a very controversial character on the Dutch literary scene, mainly because of his smug arrogance. In his numerous interviews and television appearances he displays a very evident self-satisfaction, which can also be seen in the autobiographical "Chronology" which was translated and added to this thesis as Appendix 2. In this we find frequent mention of awards and fame, and very little indication of modesty. The same tone pervades his autobiographies and to a large extent also the more autobiographical works of fiction, especially his latest novel De pupil [The pupil], the protagonist of which is a young "surprisingly attractive" writer, who eventually meets most of the characters from Mulisch's works.⁷

This trait has caused the reception of his books to be either very positive or completely negative, which is reflected in most criticism. H. A. Gomperts notices a "furious aversion on the part of many, even of serious critics," and surmises that "Mulisch apparently seems to enjoy the sort of scandal surrounding his writing."⁸ In his introduction to an interview with Harry Mulisch, Rudolf Geel writes

Without a doubt Harry Mulisch is the writer most subject to gossip and taunts in the Netherlands. [...] Most authors are recalcitrant in one or two areas; the shocks created by Mulisch came from all kinds of directions. Obviously his controversial statements are no slip of the tongue. He knows what the effect will be. That way he created an audience for himself, like some kind of surplus value of his

⁷ Mulisch, Harry, De Pupil (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1987).

⁸ "Mythen en legenden van Harry Mulisch" [Myths and Legends of Harry Mulisch], Dütting (19-49): 42.

reversed charisma.⁹

Although not convinced that Mulisch's writing needs such publicity to get an audience, I feel that Geel effectively shows the problems surrounding the personality Mulisch created for himself.

Many critics come to the conclusion that the works of Harry Mulisch are like a jigsaw puzzle which cannot be completed until this writer stops writing. All works are strongly autobiographical and each new work "shows different connections, or: shows the connections differently," as Jeroen Brouwers states, referring to the impact of Mulisch's life on his themes and characters (Harry Mulisch, 4). This autobiographical tendency can be (and is often) seen as one more sign of his conceit, but Mulisch has developed a theory to counter this interpretation: "I also want my life to overflow its banks and lead its own life. [...] I want my life to become everybody's property, so that I can disappear quietly through the back door" (Brouwers, 4). This idea is linked to Mulisch's idea that a writer exists only in his works. "Writing is my means of existence" (Food for Psychologists, 102) is meant both literally and idiomatically. According to Mulisch, a writer creates himself through his works: "[His] oeuvre is the new body of the writer--a body which he has created himself, more solid, more durable than that which his mother gave him" (Food for Psychologists, 108).

Mulisch is also a prolific writer of personal theories and opinions. On the one hand he states that one should not attempt a definite explanation of his works, in keeping with the principles of alchemy: "Working with formulas and laws is the complete opposite of the method of the alchemists, expressed in

⁹ "Wie niet gezien is die is weg," [When you're not seen, you're gone] Vlaamse Gids 58:5 (1974): 38. Translation G.H.

the guideline: obscurum per obscurius, ignotum per ignotius: ('to explain') the dark by the darker, the unknown by the more unknown" (Food for Psychologists, 149). On the other hand, Mulisch himself has attempted many explanations (some very farfetched indeed) of his own work and also tried his hand at literary theory, in Food for Psychologists, De Verteller Verteld [The Narrator Narrated] and De Toekomst van Gisteren [The Future of Yesterday].¹⁰ These are no great help to the critic, however, as Mulisch often and deliberately contradicts his own observations.

Mulisch will formulate almost any theory, explaining almost anything, and at the same time he states that "all theories are nonsense" (Food for Psychologists, 33). He has written on subjects as varied as Dutch spelling, the revolution in Cuba, astronomy, student uprisings in Amsterdam, the theories of Wilhelm Reich and, of course, about writing. May the following few excerpts from his enormous output serve to illustrate some of his ideas about his own work.

Mulisch's idea of the act of writing is that the writer, at the moment of writing is non-existent and may have no opinions or ideas of himself, nor any 'message': "the writer must have no preference, no opinion while he is writing, must not exist as a writer while writing. Only that which he is creating must exist" (Gregoor, 46). With reference to the relation between the writer and his work:

¹⁰ Food for Psychologists see "Voer voor Psychologen," 13-39 and "Manifesten" [Manifestos]: 73-87. De Verteller Verteld: Kommentaar, Katalogus, Kuriosa en een Katastrofestuk [The Narrator Narrated: Commentary, Catalogue, Curiosities and a Catastrophe piece] (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1971) deals with his novel De Verteller (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1970). De Toekomst van Gisteren. Protokol van een schrijverij [The Future of Yesterday. Protocol of an Act of Writing] (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1972). Quotations from these works were translated by G.H.

[...] I exist in what is written [...] I can do two things: either disappear completely with all of my personality in a certain experience, in my reality, in my life, whichever character that may have; or I can think about it, and then it doesn't materialize, that experience as an experience. Right? And writing is also an experience, and it is only then real writing, a real experience, it creates only, then real existence when I do not realize that it is happening. And that means that I, the one who is writing, am not there at that moment (Gregoor, 48-49).

Mulisch says about his theme (always referring to it in the singular): "And in the first place my theme has to do with that 'task' [...] and in the second place with 'one against all', or 'all against one'" (Gregoor, 68), and: "[...] what also belongs to my theme, is that the protagonist, who stands alone, has a friend. You will find this everywhere in my work" (Gregoor, 69-70). The task is not the solution to the puzzle of life, however, but, rather, increases the riddle. Mulisch's most often quoted line from his "Manifestos" shows his affinity with alchemy: "Best is to add to the puzzle" (Food for Psychologists, 87). His writing does just that.

TRENDS IN THE WORKS OF HARRY MULISCH

As we have seen, Harry Mulisch suggests that in his work we look for a unity of theme, inferring that all his works are in fact a representation of variations on the same theme. To a large extent I have found this to be true. Suggested were the following thematic trends: the individual struggling against the world, with the aid of a friend, equipped or burdened with a task, and, indeed, these elements seem to be part of all his works. Without wanting to suggest that one should take this writer's own theories at face value, I believe that these thematic trends deserve some attention. In the following discussion examples will, wherever possible, be limited to those works of Mulisch which are already available in English.¹¹

First of all, there is the task. This task is usually not a literal order, nor does the protagonist always know what the task is. In archibald strohalm the protagonist sets his own task, as does Otto Textor in The Future of Yesterday. Both these men are artists, or aspiring artists. Archibald strohalm wants to save the world from something: his anger is triggered by an old puppeteer who performs in the square under strohalm's window and enjoys a great success with the local children. In an argument with this man strohalm yells:

"[...] I am telling you: what you do is fascism, it is a fascist procedure! Perhaps horror and sentimentality were the right way to believing in the middle ages, but now... [...] Your views cannot stand the light of day! But mine can, and that's why I hereby declare [...] that nowadays the right way is laughter..." Where did that come from, where did I get that, what does it mean?... (archibald strohalm, 23)

and ends up by promising a performance of his own. During the preparations he cuts all ties to the outside world, and during the actual performance, the

¹¹ see Appendix I of this study.

crowd kills him. He set himself the task, but does not know "where [it came] from, what [it means]."

Otto Textor is the protagonist of a novel (which Mulisch never wrote, but he wrote about it in The Future of Yesterday) which deals with a situation in which Germany has won the Second World War. Textor, a reporter, wants to write a novel in which Germany has lost the war, in answer to the question "Can the artist portray something that is not there yet? Maybe even what might have been?" (The Future of Yesterday, 161). The story grows inside him like the child growing inside his wife. While trying to get an abortion for his wife (the child will be blond and therefore submitted to experiments of the fascists) he writes his novel. The destruction of a real child accompanies the creation of his brainchild. He is arrested while the abortion is taking place and upon arrival in a concentration camp "he understands that the fantasy--which lives in the manuscript [...]--is nothing" (The Future of Yesterday, 168) and voluntarily joins the non-Aryan people on their way to the gas chambers "like someone who wants nothing else" (The Future of Yesterday, 168).

Both of the above tasks have to do with the creation of an artistic reality and both end with the death of the artist. This fact is significant: the creator of the artistic reality dies, but through this death, the creation becomes "real". Mulisch is here writing about the process of writing. Peter Berger notes that "only in the negation, the destruction of ordinary life can the existence of language get its reality. A mythical, holy reality which must be preceded by a symbolic, sacrificial death."¹² Berger here borrows from Mulisch's own idea: "Once events have passed, they are no longer accidental

¹² "Harry Mulisch of: De thuiskomst van Koning Oedipus," ["Harry Mulisch or: the Return of King Oidipus"] Vlaamse Gids 58.5 (1974): 19.

but indestructible for eternity--should the god live somewhere, it is in history" (Brouwers, 4). Reality only becomes unchangeable, and therefore real, after it has passed, once it is "irrevocable" like death. Death is not only an end to one reality, it is also the beginning of another, creative reality. In Berger's words: "Every act of literature is therefore a symbolic sacrifice during which reality is sacrificed for a new reality" (Vlaamse Gids 58.5: 23).

In writing about the struggle of the individual, Mulisch is really writing about the act of artistic creation: although almost nowhere as explicit as in The Future of Yesterday--where the protagonist is a writer--this can be taken as the real theme underlying the themes of all of his works, the one trait of his works that the writer himself never mentions in his theories. It explains the dominance of autobiography in his works: Mulisch writes about the writer, and the writer he knows best is himself.

In The Future of Yesterday Mulisch takes this writing about the act of creation one step further and establishes a clear link between his writing and Postmodern trends. When speaking of the problems he encountered while trying to write his novel, he points out that the role of Otto Textor (whose first name was chosen for its symmetry, and the last name derived from the root "text") was the real problem:

He, after all, was the mediator between the main story and the story within the story [...] He should have been something like 'the type of the type'-- i. e. an inexistability. And this inexistability was also confirmed and emphasized by his protagonist. Because as Otto Textor was the protagonist [...] in my story, thus I would have been the protagonist in his: I: 'Harry Mulisch'.
With this mechanism, the autocreation, the creation of the self, through which I would appear as an artificial human being in the retort of a story, I have been working as long as I have been writing (The Future of Yesterday, 219).

His novel was to create what none of the Postmodern novels had created:

Not only was he the impossible mediator between a play of masks

and a psychological novel, he also had to be the mediator between me and I in his story--he was the difference between me and myself: he was my alienator. He was the fact that I write. When this last cause of my writing wanted to become its subject, the writing automatically stopped. The attempt to visualize Otto Textor was an attempt to visualize the mirror, not the frame or its spots, but the mirror itself. [...] Like a threat he stood in the background of all that alienating writing of writers about writers, which literally everybody was doing in the sixties (The Future of Yesterday, 223-24).

Mulisch found that taking the idea of alienation this far was impossible. The ultimate Postmodern novel was therefore not written, but resulted in a novel about the writing of a novel: "Otto Textor's 'Harry Mulisch' would of course also be working at a book: in which Germany had won the war. One can only suspect that only the latter book was created and that the reader is reading it at the moment" (The Future of Yesterday, 225).

One can find many Postmodernist traits in Mulisch's works. His treatment of time is highly imaginative, as in the creation of the anti-history in The Stone Bridal Bed, which will be discussed below. Douwe Wessel Fokkema sees the sociocode of Postmodernism as including "a refusal to distinguish between truth and fiction, past and present, relevant and irrelevant."¹³ These boundaries are certainly blurred in Mulisch's works. Frequent repetition of certain phrases is another trait Mulisch shares with the Postmodern writers, as is his tendency to change from one reality to another and the emphasis on the importance of words. According to Fokkema, "in the universe of Postmodernism, words invent our world, words shape our world, words are becoming the sole justification of our world" (Literary History. Modernism and Postmodernism, 45). Mulisch feels that words have such great importance that

¹³ Fokkema, D. W., Literary History. Modernism and Postmodernism, Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature 19 (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1984), 42.

one should be able to see every sentence as the key to his whole work: "not a sentence of a writer can be missed from his work" (Gregoor, 16).

In Mulisch's novel The Stone Bridal Bed Norman Corinth returns to Dresden, which he helped destroy during the Second World War. He has no feelings of guilt, no emotion, yet ends up emotionally wrecked (his wrecking a car at the end of the novel is a beautiful metaphor for his mental state). Corinth feels that he has a task: "He must ask her. He must know everything. Everything must be charted--every act, every intention, every thought. Before his return to Baltimore everything would have to be laid down" (The Stone Bridal Bed, 87). Jan Hein Donner sees this whole story as symbolical of the act of writing.¹⁴ Although Donner, as a close friend of Mulisch, borrows heavily from Mulisch's own theories, this point of view is valid: Mulisch's writing is very symbolic and many elements in this novel can be seen as a symbol for the book in creation. Thus, the confusion in Corinth's mind is echoed by his surroundings: a labyrinthine house, with windows that don't open and blind walls, near a city in ruins where Corinth gets lost. Donner sees this house as a symbol for a novel. It certainly reflects the Postmodern preoccupation with labyrinths. Corinth too, at one point, wants to be a writer:

He thought, I shall withdraw into the hills and write the impenetrable, immovable anti-history book in which the Massacre of Dresden is no longer obscure compared with the Battle of Dresden and the Battle of Marathon, but in which Napoleon and Miltiades are mentioned at the bottom of the page; the anti-history of nothing fighting against something, the anti-biography of men who never existed: Hitler, Corinth... (The Stone Bridal Bed, 97)

Corinth echoes Mulisch: the writer does not exist at the moment of writing,

¹⁴ "Het Stenen Bruidsbéd van Harry Mulisch," ["The Stone Bridal Bed of Harry Mulisch"] in Kritisch Nabeeld, ed. Hans Dütting, 62-85. See also Donner, J. H., Mulisch, naar ik veronderstel [Mulisch, I presume] (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1971).

artistic creation exists in destruction: "A house only becomes a house when it is broken to pieces... Everything that is broken to pieces becomes a house" (The Stone Bridal Bed, 55).

Destruction is an important theme in Mulisch's work: Corinth has already destroyed a city, and, gratuitously, part of the population by shooting at people who tried to save themselves from the fire in the city by standing in the water of the river. When he returns to the city for a conference of dentists, he meets and seduces a woman guide. The erotic relationship between them is always verbally linked with that destruction, the shooting and the bombing; the description of their love-making is cut off by a "chorus" describing the actual bombing.

Destruction in Mulisch's works exists mainly in war and/or fascism, as we have seen in these three novels, but in this destruction lies an element of hope. Even Corinth at one point feels that there is a positive outcome to his visit to Dresden, even if this is not a conscious realization: "Surprised he listened to the feeling of agreement in him, and thought, it is unbelievable. He looked at his hands for some time, two familiar patches in the dark, and ran them through his hair. All over. He had been to Dresden" (The Stone Bridal Bed, 150).

Their body and its "reality" seem to surprise all Mulisch's protagonists when subconscious realization of their task takes place. They seem not to expect to have a body anymore. They are overtaken by it, quite often suffer from some unnameable illness and seem to have to fight this. It seems to be more than just a physical struggle:

He thought, it is as if it never happened. Three thousand years ago. I am a Greek, slain under Agamemnon, but still alive. I never think about it. [...] then he felt his face getting clammy, and at once it grew worse—but he did not know what was getting worse. [...] He

thought, light, light, but could not speak; he felt he was making a superhuman effort, but what? How? Against what? (The Stone Bridal Bed, 78-79).

Most pronounced is this loss of control over the body in The Assault, the latest novel of Mulisch to have been translated into English.¹⁵ Anton Steenwijk was 12 years old when his parents and brother were killed by the Germans in retaliation for the murder of one of their informers, who was dragged to their house by the neighbours. In his later life he wants to avoid the past as much as possible, like Corinth, but it catches up with him every time he meets one of the other people who were involved in or witness of the events which "shaped his world view". They all help to clear up the events in Anton's mind, but rather than solving the problem of why it happened, their stories add to the puzzle. Eventually, any small thing which reminds him of the events in his youth triggers an unnameable illness of his body, a complete loss of control. When the last piece of information reaches Anton, and he understands how it all happened, this realization is symbolized in the fact that Anton also finds the answer to a cryptic puzzle he was trying to solve. Laughing (often an expression of anguish in Mulisch's works), he finds a word: "il se contenta de hocher la tête en riant [...]. Simultanément, il pensa: 'ravages', naturellement, 'ravages',--voilà la définition vague du dieu du Soleil" (L'Attentat, 233). Again, destruction accompanies the completion of the story of Anton. This novel is more optimistic than The Stone Bridal Bed, although Philippe Noble has successfully argued the similarity between the two novels,

¹⁵ De Aanslag (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1982) translated by Claire White, The Assault (New York: Pantheon, 1985). Quotations are from the French translation: Noble, Philippe, L'Attentat (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1984).

both thematically and symbolically.¹⁶

In all novels discussed so far, the protagonist has a friend: Strohm strikes up a friendship with a painter, Textor confides in a colleague, Corinth meets a German dentist who brags about his warcrimes, Anton has the memory of the woman he met in a prison cell on the night of the murders. But Textor's friend betrays him to the Germans, Schneiderhahn has lied about his career in the war and the woman from the prison turns out to be one of the partisans who killed the informer, and who was thus indirectly responsible for the death of Anton's family.

In Two Women, the second novel of Mulisch which was translated into English, this theme of betrayal is worked out completely.¹⁷ Laura, an older woman, meets a young girl and they have a Lesbian relationship which seems very idyllic. However, the younger girl lies about her life to both her own mother and Laura's mother. Eventually she runs off with Laura's ex-husband. This betrayal is reversed when she comes back pregnant with the child which Laura had wanted. But the reversal doesn't work: the husband kills the girl during a conversation which Laura forced her to have to clear things up. Laura ends up in a mental state much like Corinth's: "I sat amongst them that afternoon, because I no longer knew how to go forward or backward in my life" (Two Women, 13). When Laura's mother dies, she drives to France without sleeping and then writes down the story in a room overlooking a deep pit. Rather than travel from one dead person to another, she stays: "How long

¹⁶ See "'La Guerre de Troie a toujours lieu.' Permanence des Thèmes et des Formes dans Het Stenen Bruidsbed et De Aanslag de Harry Mulisch," Études Germaniques 39 (1984): 347-61.

¹⁷ Twee vrouwen, 10^e druk (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1984) translated by Els Early, Two women (London: John Calder; New York: Riverrun Press, 1980).

do I want to stay? I have nothing else to report. [...] immediately under my window gapes the hole like a waiting grave. I can be all the way to the bottom before the echo of my cry comes back" (Two Women, 126).

The loss of control discussed above is linked to another part of Mulisch's theme: the metamorphosis, the generation of a god. Peter Berger explains this element by stating that "on the level where his creation is reality, the writer is transmuted to another, a god with godly insight into the puzzle of the world" (Vlaamse Gids 58.5, 19). This theme is worked out fully in Mulisch's play Tanchelijn. Kroniek van een Ketter [Tanchelijn, Chronicle of an heretic].¹⁸ This play was based on a real person in Flanders, an heretic with many followers who eventually killed him. However, Mulisch gave his play the subtitle "Not an historical play in five acts," thus effectively distancing his creation from real history. Tanchelijn declares himself to be God. The church finds this unacceptable and tries to bribe his close friend Everwachter, who eventually betrays him, because

[...] He didn't become insane enough. He became insane in the apocryphal way. A madman who says that he is the pope is less insane than the pope himself. the "pope": that is canonical insanity. The insanity without which the world perishes in emptiness--the insanity which is the world. [...] Such is confirmed reality. But "god"? What is "god"? Nothing. Less than a curate. Tanchelijn is nothing in this world. He has never been. He will never be.' (Tanchelijn, 120).

Mulisch's protagonist trespasses on time, steps into the "anti-history", turns his creation into reality, but also realizes that it is not his own creation, but history repeating itself. H. A. Gomperts states that "In The black light, a short novel, it also happens a couple of times than things happen because people believe in them" (Dütting, 31). Gomperts bases this to a large

¹⁸ Tanchelijn. Kroniek van een Ketter (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1960). Quotations were translated from the Dutch by G.H.

extent on Mulisch's "magical thinking." Mulisch's protagonist, much like the alchemist and the writer, creates his own reality from history.

Because of this reworking of time, both the style and the structure of Mulisch's works become very complicated. But Mulisch can handle the elaborate "juggling" of time and tone, although this occasionally irks the critics, who may accuse him of "oracle like language of the brand Mulisch" (Dütting, 44), "monstrous sentences" (Dütting, 65), and "word fetishism" (Dütting, 125). But most cleverness is not gratuitous, since Mulisch's writing is highly symbolical.

Based on his idea of anti-history and the recurrence of certain "myths" and events, imagery and symbols from the stone age permeate his works. Noble has discussed the significance of the leitmotif of the stone in both The Stone Bridal Bed and The Assault. Another symbol of eternity is the lizard in The Assault, as A. Kooyman indicates: in alchemical writings the lapis philosophorum, the stone which will render immortal, is symbolized by the salamander.¹⁹ Great significance is also given to the names of his protagonists: archibald strohalm, clutching at a straw; Otto Textor, creating a text which causes his death; Norman Corinth, whose name reminds us of the two similar histories of the Normans and the Corinthians, both conquered after being the conquerors; Anton Steenwijk, "steen" meaning "stone" in Dutch.

All themes, motifs, symbols and trends discussed in this chapter can be found in the story translated for this study. The following short analysis will, therefore, emphasize only those points which serve to indicate the importance of this story in the general oeuvre of the writer.

¹⁹ See "De Alchemie en Mulisch' Aanslag," ["Alchemy and Mulisch's Assault"] Nieuwe Taalgids 78 (1985): 523-24.

• ANALYSIS OF "INSPECTION"

"Keuring" (which can be translated both as "inspection" or "medical examination"--see "Translators Notes"--) first appeared in 1955, in the magazine Libertinage, and was printed in 1957 in the collection of stories De Versierde Mens [The Decorated Man]. This collection fits chronologically between Mulisch's first and second novels: archibald strohalm and The Stone Bridal Bed, and is characterized by the almost mythical essence of each of the stories. They all treat the absurdity and futility of human effort against other humans, but there is a turning point in each of them at which the struggle ceases to be human and takes on mythical dimensions. In this aspect these stories, too, reflect the thematic trends discussed above.

Most significant in this collection is that the task is almost always concrete, but in its exploration, most stories quickly turn to the fantastic. In the title story, "The Decorated Man", an officer in (supposedly) the third world war is appointed volunteer for a suicidal mission to destroy "the Beast"; his task is represented thus

"You will exchange your life for at least another 40 million--on our side alone. You will go on living in human memory as one of the greatest heroes in history. No--not a hero, [...] something else...more dangerous... I'm still trying to find it" ("The Decorated Man", 21).

Although this story is perhaps the least fantastic of all, the ending precludes a literal interpretation

Why had he dived underneath it? Not because he couldn't die--he could--everything had suddenly become impossible. No hero's death--an impossible death. He could not die. [...] But once every few centuries a soft gliding and humming arose in that night, a mirage--that was he, an awareness of existence, and endless amazement: Bernard-Brose--Bernard Brose. ("The Decorated Man", 23)

The references to a Christ here are obvious: Brose's task is not to become a

hero, but a martyr. Sacrifice is needed for creation. Likewise, in "A City in the Sun" Ankor has a concrete task: to transport his master's piano during the destruction of the world.²⁰ He dies, but something is created in all this destruction: "There he remained, suspended forever--It seemed as if the Stone Age had begun anew" (The Decorated Man, 219).

In the most popular story from this collection (it is compulsory reading in many high schools in Holland) "What happened to Sergeant Masuro?", the protagonist, a sergeant in the Dutch troops in Indonesia, slowly turns to stone. His superior gets the task of recounting the events leading up to this climax in a letter to a ministerial office in Holland "as if [he] was telling it to a friend" ("What happened to Sergeant Masuro?", 273). In his account it slowly becomes clear that although man can try to understand why certain things happen, there is nothing to understand: "Right... so you are my friend, Gentlemen. You shall hear what I know about it. I know nothing about it. I only know that it happened and that I was there" ("What happened to Sergeant Masuro?", 273). This reflects Anton Steenwijk's conclusion in The Assault.

In "Inspection", however, the task is not explicitly described, nor does it result--at least not in the course of the story--in the protagonist's death. The plot of this story is simple and linear. Sander Broodman is called up for military service. Every conscript has to appear before a medical examination board in order to be "inspected" for physical fitness, but Sander decides not to go. The military police reacts quickly: he is picked up the next morning. But here the everyday world ends: from this point on, the "factual account" turns into an almost Gothic story. Sander is creating his own reality. This becomes clear during the 'tests' which the conscripts are subjected to.

²⁰ "Een Stad in de Zon" [A City in the Sun], De Versierde Mens, 195-219.

Everything to do with the army is broken and dirty: it seems as if there is a war going on, but this suspicion is not worked out to the reader's satisfaction. Sander is the only one who appears to notice: "Nobody gave the impression of being surprised by the appearance of the soldiers. Didn't they have eyes?" The conscripts are subjected to tests that seem more like the plagues God bestowed upon the Egyptians. During the first, Sander has a vision: "images appeared before his eyes as he sank to the floor: battlefields, tanks roaring from forests, burning villages, people, their arms raised, being scorched in phosphorous and nuclear fire..." (46-47). These images, once seen by the protagonist, become reality later in the story, a reality which becomes more and more frightening to Sander. Yet the other conscripts appear to take it in their stride. They obey orders, get shot at, but also shoot to kill without rebelling. Sander is the only person with 'eyes', the only one among the conscripts capable of vision. This is stated explicitly towards the end of the story by the repetition of "see": "The soldier gave a friendly nod, but then Sander saw, he didn't know what made him see it, but he saw it with unshakable certainty, he saw that it was the heroic, suffering shadow of Hein Ankersmit which was being put against the wall" (84, italics by G. H.).

The only person who rebels is linked with Sander early in the story: "Sander tumbled against the sergeant, Quiff fell to the floor" (37). The protagonist seems to have a friend. Quiff tries to help Sander, to prompt him not to conform, to show courage and defy the officers. Sander admires him, but doesn't follow his example. In fact, he urges Quiff to conform.

"Et tu, Brute?" hissed Quiff.

"Don't simplify things so stupidly!" Sander took two rifles and pushed one into Quiff's hands, thinking: He is right, dammit, he is right. (57)

When Quiff doesn't conform, Sander is furious:" furiously Sander saw how in

the end only Quiff spurned the support of the rifle and kept stumbling on doggedly" (58).

Quiff, however, is not the protagonist's friend. Sander expects nothing from him, but focuses his expectations on the sergeant: "In the soiled face he detected vague signs that encouraged him. There were weaknesses, a tenseness that he could use if he were clever" (31). The sergeant is a friend to him:

Sander discovered a feeling of desolation within himself when the sergeant had disappeared around the corner. Because he knew him longest? Possibly because of that tenseness in his black face, from which perhaps a big help could suddenly appear (42).

The words "tenseness" and "tense" are repeated five times. The sergeant's face and attitude are opposed to each other. He is always calm in his speech and orders, yet there is a tenseness around his mouth. He is friendly, but his help consists in trying to kill Sander. This reversal of friendship is echoed in Quiff: Quiff nods reassuringly to Bandid when he needs it, but ends up shooting him in the face. These situations echo war: "Such was war. Enemies shot each other in the chest, allies in the back in an even more dangerous, reverse enmity, called friendship" (63).

Sander, unlike Quiff, doesn't defy the system, but wants to defeat it with its own weapons, much like Everwachter wanted to defeat the church by using a false Messiah: "in him I will find the mirror, which will cast me over the land, until one can no longer find God and sin within the iron discipline of an empty piety" (*Tanchelijn*, 25). Both attempts are doomed from the beginning. Sander's feelings of security stay only as long as he is within the confines of the barracks: "Sander took it all in greedily; he felt relieved because something that he had to forget started to move from him" (38). He is not responsible for his actions, he is obeying orders: "Nothing to worry about, he thought; I must lose myself in this completely, not think about anything but what is

happening now: then I can take it" (44). He feels comfortable, because, like strohalm, he is cut off from the rest of the world. The alienation seems complete. The reader is told four times that the windows of the barracks are blinded, boarded up. Inside the barracks, Sander doesn't even know what the weather is like: "outside, Sander noticed that the weather was beautiful" (58).

As soon as he is dragged into the world of the army, he loses his sense of direction: "In order to determine the direction, Sander tried to recall which turns had been taken, but he couldn't anymore" (35). It never comes back: "He had long ago lost his bearings; it was probable that walls had been knocked out to connect the buildings and he might already be in one of the next ones: Rehoboth or Ir-Nahash" (55). Even the world outside the barracks is unknown to him: "The sun was shining on a concrete highway which he couldn't place" (58). The barracks themselves are like a Postmodernist labyrinth: they seem to consist mainly of passages and hallways. The word "passage" occurs ten times. The army is a passage to something unknown. The conscripts are constantly surrounded: in the police van by sirens, in the courtyard and passages by shabby soldiers and bayonets, and when these release them, they are still surrounded by forests.

Not only is Sander slowly being alienated from his former reality, the reader, too, seems to lose his bearings. In keeping with Postmodernist trends, the reader is slowly induced to give up trying to relate the universe that is being established in the story to his own. The physical examination grows more cruel, then culminates in the conscripts being shot at. The setting outside the barracks grows stranger too, plants wrestle primevally, real enemies appear, real shots are fired. The serviceman, at first a calming presence, becomes a mumbling fool. Nothing remains within a recognizable framework.

In these surroundings, Sander wants to be happy, because they should enable him to forget the desertion of his girlfriend. He doesn't succeed. First he is reminded of her by one of the boys when he talks about his girlfriend. Then, as the horrors of war unfold before his eyes, he loses control and tries to give sense to this desertion. As in The Stone Bridal Bed, the sexual relationship is identified with war and destruction: "'Keep an eye on the forest, there's a war on, that's more important than your little fucks.' 'It's the same,' groaned Sander" (71). He confides in the serviceman, which results in his release from military duty. But slowly, the realization of his task has begun.

Where does Sander Broodman's task lie? When the serviceman asks him what he plans to do before his death he answers: "[Meanwhile]... I'll finish my say." (79) The serviceman doesn't want to know what he has to say, but asks what he wants to be. Sander feels tricked. "God", he answers, in a cold sweat. The question is scary because, like archibald strohalm, he does not know where the answer came from: "What was happening inside him?" (80) Like all Mulisch's characters, he does not know what his task is, but when forced he can find an answer. At this point the body becomes unfamiliar and unpredictable: "It seemed to Sander as if he radiated light" (80).

Sander wants to give meaning, "to be able in two words to say it all, to do it all" (80): to create a new reality in which there is "a point which [gives] meaning to the rest, death and defeat [and] a man with a beard, a god, a joker, who could confirm it" (80). To become a creator, a god. But once again, creation can happen only through destruction. Reality exists only after it has passed, after it has stopped being changeable.

On a textual level there are many indications of the Christ-parallel. The

army surroundings give Sander the first idea of his task. The buildings bear names of biblical sites, and the sites reflect the "tortures" to which the conscripts are exposed: Ir-Nahash (the Serpent City: the guns of the soldiers "grazed his calf" like a snakebite, in the end Sander is afraid he has been poisoned), Rehoboth (where Isaac dug a well, and now the site of famous baths: the conscripts are tested for hearing in a round cell, where sound reverberates around the walls, like the echo in a well) and Bethesda (a biblical pool with curative powers: the conscripts are flooded with light). It is also significant that after the episode with the serviceman Sander confuses the last name with Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ: has he now become Christ? The serviceman ends up "with raised hands and mumbling lips--like a praying Moslem" (81): it seems as if he is praying to Sander.

Military service means destruction, but for Sander also a process of discovery. Before the entrance of the sergeant, "he crawled across the bed with his eyes closed" (30), but afterwards we see him with his eyes wide open: "wide-eyed" (35), "Sander opened his eyes wide" (42). He has to be forced into discovery though: "and fingers opened his eyes forcefully" (44). The twins, however, by reminding him of his old world, try to keep him from this discovery: "it was as if they had their fingers in his ears and eyes and nose." (41) In the end, when destruction has resulted in creation, he doesn't need to be forced, doesn't fight reality any longer: "he was shooting before he had even aimed and was still shooting, his eyes wide open, [...]" (85).

The destruction which takes place in "Inspection" is the destruction of time: it reveals the idea of an anti-history, in which events are merely repetitions of events that have taken place since the Stone Age. This story, like "What Happened to Sergeant Masuro?", introduces the theme which is explored

more fully in The Stone Bridal Bed: the sentence "As if he were doing it for the thousandth time, he added the sergeant to the row of soldiers already lying there" (85) is explained by the following, often quoted paragraph from the novel:

He thought, there are two histories. With a sense of discovery he pulled up his legs, closing his eyes. On his face he felt the silent sun. He thought, one is the history of the spirit, bloody but spiritual, with a purpose and results: Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon [...] That is time, evolution. But beside it, under it, there is an anti-history in the stillness of death, and at certain intervals history sinks away in it. At such times the anti-history of Mao Dun Tanhu, Attila, Tamerlane, Genghis Khan, Hitler, prevails. Then there is no more thought, no purpose, no result-only nothingness. There is no lapse of time between the massacres of the Huns and the concentration camps of Hitler. They lie side by side at the bottom of eternity (TSBB, 96).

Sander has done it a thousand times. There is nothing new under the sun. Quiff is right when he asks "Et tu, Brute?" (57). There is no difference between Sander's shooting of the sergeant and Brutus's killing of Caesar. Sander, in betraying his "friend", repeats the ancient theme of betrayal. In killing the sergeant, he becomes all murderers; having understood this, there is nothing more for him to understand. "Nobody can undo it. It had only an inside: I made it an outside. It is gone, it is everywhere..." (86). Only what has happened is real and cannot be changed.

Sander, whose name echoes "salamander" is eternal, one more expression of the anti-history, one more variation of Mulisch's theme. However, as we have seen above, the story explicitly addresses the thematic trends and motifs, and can be seen as the epitome of Mulisch's works. It was written more than two years before the more famous stories in the collection The Decorated Man, and more than six years before The Stone Bridal Bed, yet it is closer to Mulisch's later works than either "What Happened to Sergeant Masuro?" or "The City in the Sun." Although, as also in The Stone Bridal Bed, the more

positive note we find in the more mature works of Mulisch is still missing in the ending of the story, it gives a clear idea of the "view of the world" the author held in his earlier writings and of the powerful writing that was inspired by it.

Inspection²¹

for I. v. Z.

²¹ With many thanks to Peter Thompson and Beryl and Tony Tankard for the editing of the translation and their helpful comments and suggestions. G. H.

I

The maximum penalty for failing to report to the conscription board at the appointed time is death.

This was printed in italics at the bottom of the calling-up notice. Sander Broodman, the subject of this discourse, had written an exclamation mark next to it, and had gone out to play billiards. "We shall see," he had said to a friend.

At the appointed time he made an exquisite three-cushion shot with red.

The next morning at seven a rifle butt rapped on the door of his attic room. While a dream, in which a girl was again present like a haze, quickly evaporated, he crawled across his bed with his eyes closed and turned the key. At once an enormous sergeant filled the slanting cubby-hole. He unrolled a piece of paper several meters long.

"Broodman, Sander, eighteen years old, without profession, 47 Van der Lubbe street?" he shouted.

"Jawohl," grinned Sander.

"Get dressed immediately and come with me."

With his amazement increasing by the second, he looked at the apparition. Was this a respected officer of the Dutch armed forces? An office clerk from Schoonhoven? A farmer's son from Drente? His face was blackened, above it a dented helmet covered with dust, the steel of which had been torn.

And his uniform? Bloody tatters; a few long shreds hung near his left thigh, at knee level the bare leg disappeared into filthy rags stained with blood and pus.

Sander jumped from his bed and stumbled to the garret window. War? The country in ruins?

Oh heavens! Did ever the plumed minstrels in the four weeping willows warble more peacefully? Not one body, not one arm was hanging in the branches; only the skeleton of a decayed kite. On the neighbouring factory site workers were pushing their barrows over the rails, unarmed and hardly maimed. The chimneys sank away beneath their smoke, and in the distance the pasture was lying in the calm morning haze, with the bodies of cows floating on it like new fish. The sun would probably not come out for a while yet, but it was there: behind the clouds above a fatherland in peace...

With a jerk of magical speed Sander turned around, but the sergeant was still there.

"Get dressed!" he shouted again, took a step towards the window and with his rifle butt smashed it open so the splinters shattered over the rooftiles.

Sander complied quickly and without asking questions. Every so often he glanced at the broadsword which followed his every move. In the soiled face he detected vague signs that encouraged him. There were weaknesses, a tenseness that he could use if he were clever. When he had dressed he said:

"I am not into politics."

The sergeant readied his carbine.

"Downstairs, lout!"

Farewell, my room, farewell.

"Do my parents know about this?" he asked on the stairs from the attic, the rifle-barrel in his back like a subcutaneous tumour.

"If you have so many questions, we'll presently plug your trap with uranium. Everything is done in the service of the taxpayer. Or maybe your

parents don't pay taxes?"

Nowhere a trace of his father or his mother. Were they still asleep? Then who had opened the door? At that moment he saw a soldier with a tripod and a camera emerge from the bedroom of his parents; with his hand on the doorknob he made another friendly nod into the room, then quickly descended the stairs. With a frown, Sander walked downstairs. The front door was open, and on the sidewalk yet another soldier. His upper body was naked and sunburned, a machine-gun dangled by his side: frightful steel against naked flesh. Cartridges were lying in the gravel, but it seemed unlikely to Sander that there had been shots; probably they were old ones that he had only now thrown out.

"Here's another of those little bastards that was rotting in the sack," the sergeant said.

Using his carbine, he pushed Sander towards a police van camouflaged with nets and branches. In front of it and behind it were motorcyclists covered with sand and clods of earth. The avenue was empty and peaceful in the thin morning sun, garbage cans were ranked on the edge of the sidewalk; in the distance there was only a milkman who was putting bottles near the doors and paid them no attention. A soldier with close-cropped red hair opened the door of the van, and, while Sander was getting in, a little boy approached open-mouthed; on his head he had a three-cornered hat made out of newspaper. Sander got a shove in the back and tumbled inside, a moment later the van drove off quickly, surrounded by sirens.

He fell down on a bench and, after the first few upsetting turns, he looked around. In the light of a yellowish lamp the sergeant leaned his back against the cab, the two soldiers stood near the door, their fingers touching

the triggers of their machine-guns. Between these threats dejected boys were sitting on benches facing each other. Uncertain, half in thought, they were looking at the floor or at the roof; they avoided looking at each other. Some were still dressed boyishly in outgrown raincoats, most were more sporting and more colourful to look at. In a corner were twins: two pouts wearing men's hats. Beside these idiots he noticed a boy in a loud tie: he had styled his black hair into one single towering wave, in such a way that nothing had been left on the back of his head. Nobody gave the impression of being surprised by the appearance of the soldiers. Didn't they have eyes? Then he remembered that the soldier with the camera who had come out of the bedroom of his parents, had also been covered with blood and rags: yet they had apparently talked to him in a friendly manner. And what had there been to be photographed?

The van stopped with screeching tires and the sirens died down. After the servicemen got out, the boys started to move and looked furtively at each other. The twins took off their hats, wiped the sweat off their brows, and put their hats back on. A boy with a downy, irregular moustache cleared his throat.

"Which unit do you want to join?" he asked another boy.

"I don't care. The navy, I guess. How about you?"

"The air force, of course, you know, super, in a fighter, whoaaaow!" he said, shut one eye tightly and held his hands out next to his shoulders like slanting wings.

"Signals is the thing for me," another one said, "there you get a very technical training, which will serve you later."

"Later?" asked the boy with the wave.

"When your service is over."

"When your service is over," he repeated and nodded. "O miseras hominum mentes, o pectora caeca."

Sander watched him with interest. The others looked at him scornfully and the boy with the little moustache said:

"He's hit his head, see?"

"I think that sergeant is a darned nice fellow, don't you guys?" asked the boy who wanted to join the navy.

"I am sure he'll be alright once you get to know him better."

"Say, did you see those smashing motorcycles?" asked a boy with a wide turned-up nose. "My girl and I want to buy one of those too. Later. Wroarrrr..." he said and jerked his wrists as if he were shifting gears and accelerating, "wroarrrr, wroarrrr!"

Sander felt the bitter water in his mouth and looked at the glowing thread in the lamp. His face went limp with rising tears and nausea. He saw a girl disappear around a corner, a back, a muscled calf, a heel--and then just the corner: big, roughly hewn blocks of granite of a bank building, just above the tiles an iron ventilation grate: cars, bicyclists, a tram, the sun on the street...

After a while the door of the van opened and a greying gentleman wearing a dressing gown over his pajamas was talking to the red-haired soldier. Smiling, he looked to one side and took a step back in his slippers. A moment later a blond boy appeared in the doorway; when he had a moment's trouble with the step, the redhead knocked him into the van with the side of his machine-gun and he fell forward into the aisle. While the sergeant stepped over him and the motorcycles started up, the gentleman laughed and said:

"Hang in there, boy. This is an important day in your life, you're on your way to becoming a man now. I'm sure I can trust these gentlemen to lend you a hand with that," he said and gave a friendly nod to the half-naked soldier who now got in too and slammed the door in his face.

"Balls," he said.

The van drove off. Nobody spoke. The newcomer scrambled onto the bench and looked around with mousy eyes, pale from fright and lack of sleep; his hair had been combed forward, he had a bandaid on his temple. The engine whined and the sirens wailed. They must have left the city already, the van now drove straight on without turning. In order to determine the direction, Sander tried to recall which turns had been taken, but he couldn't anymore.

After a while the professional zeal of the soldiers near the door slackened. They dropped their guns and lit cigarettes; finally they motioned the conscripts to move their asses over and sat down facing each other. The half-naked one started telling about a chick he had met in the city the night before. The redhead stuck his thumb in between his index and middle finger, imitated the sound of a fart, and looked at him inquiringly.

"Hello," said the half-naked one and burst out laughing.

When he let loose with details the conscripts swallowed and looked at the floor, wide-eyed; only the twins listened with a polite expression on their faces. The conversation didn't last and the soldiers let their bored eyes wander over the boys.

"Say, you over there!" the half-naked one called suddenly. "Say, Bandaid!"

All looked over to the newcomer.

"You... you mean... Yes sir?"

"Your name is Bandaid, right?"

"No, I... Oh, you mean..." He felt his temple. "Yes, I..."

"Dance for us, Bandid."

The redhead started to laugh. Helplessly Bandid looked around. Slowly he got up. The others looked stiffly in front of them, their eyes slid watchfully from one side to the other. His teeth chattering Bandid looked at the sergeant, but he was jotting something down in a notebook.

"Dance, Bandid!" shouted the soldier. His jaws started to grind. It seemed as if he was devouring his laughter.

"Yes, I... I can't... Here?" He pointed to the floor inquiringly, suddenly imploring.

"Dance!" screamed the soldier, half upright, the machine-gun in trembling hands in front of his naked breast aimed at Bandid. From below he looked at him, panting, sweat over his face. Bandid turned red and then white. He lifted up his hands to his shoulders, the fingers hanging limp, and then lifted his legs by turns, while tears were rolling down his face. The sirens entwined like undulating ropes, became entangled, tore loose, and rose and fell for seconds in a piercing harmony. This is when the world ends, Sander thought. If one were to tell me: dance!--I would stand up and...

"Broodman, you dance too!" the sergeant said calmly.

Sander jumped up and, with an awareness of the best deed in his life, pushed Bandid back onto the bench.

"Ha," he roared. "Tebaljebibab. Wòdeliwòdeliwòopwoop! Peglòoliap!" Away he went; one finger towards the heavens, jerking shoulders and knees, turning, dancing, singing.

⁴ Bewildered, the soldier lowered his gun, looked at Bandid, then at Sander again and slowly sat down. Suddenly the redhead was upright.

"You, Quiff! Dance along!"

The boy with the wave stood up dead straight, put his coat on, threw his head back, and refused with a forceful no.

"Well goddammit! You're saying no?"

"Causa finita."

"What? And speaking Russian too? Goddammit, you seem to forget that you're dealing with a defender of Christian culture, shithead!" It was as if his hair burst out in flames. "Mozart!" he yelled. "Rembrandt!" He slavered with rage and pulled at the air with his teeth.

With a jolt, the van slowed. Sander tumbled against the sergeant, Quiff fell to the floor. Like a siren the silence rose and fell. The door was jerked open from the outside.

"I'll get you yet, damn communist!" the redhead called before he jumped out of the van.

With his carbine across his chest, the sergeant herded the conscripts from the van. They were standing in a courtyard of grey tiles and were surrounded by a circle of shabby front-line soldiers with their guns at the ready; through the air and through their clothes they felt the bayonets. Big buildings stood around haphazardly, their facades carrying names: Bethesda, Sarepta, Rehoboth, Ir-Nahash: giants, built listlessly of brick fifty years ago, the windows boarded up or blinded with blue paper. Further down there was a drill, officers in battledress armed to the teeth were walking around busily and a pile of bloodied stretchers was lying in a corner. Over the rooftops trees waved. Shooting and shouting sounded from the areas behind the buildings; also a screeching sound, as if something were speeding over rails.

The sergeant shouted an order and in between the bayonets the

conscripts moved to Sarepta. Sander took it all in greedily; he felt relieved because something that he had to forget started to move from him. He looked at the bayonet next to him and saw that it had clotted blood sticking to it. As they reached the entrance, Quiff pulled his sleeve. He had approached inconspicuously.

"Why did you dance?" he hissed from between his teeth.

Sander smiled.

"You should always defeat people with their own weapons," he said, not in such a low voice that the soldiers couldn't hear it. "If somebody thinks you are crazy, then play the mental-home inmate. You should always confirm the obvious."

"I don't like nice talk. I know what honour is, you are a lackey."

"An unbelievable dandy, that's what you are. Anyway, I quite like you, Quiff. Your hairstyle is really more than ridiculous."

"You'll end up like one of them," Quiff said and indicated the soldiers with his head.

Sander laughed loudly and the sergeant eyed him sharply.

"There are no worse psychologists than men of honour. You know who'll end up like that? Bandid. His world has fallen without glory, but he is still alive. Your world will break, you won't come out of here alive."

"And your world?"

Sander looked at him.

"I don't have one," he said.

They came into a small hall with gypsum pillars, which formed the base of two wide oaken stairways. The floor was marble and golden casements rose to the ceilings where abundant stucco hung like feverish dreams and unfulfilled

desires; but everything was filthy, broken, destroyed; dirt and paper covered the marble, roughly made bricks glanced through big holes in the plastered walls. The gym into which they were shown might at one time have been the throne room of some rich man who had disappeared into the holes and crypts of time. The hooks of the ropes and the rings had been screwed into the angels, wall bars covered the soft green, unrecognizable remains of murals which only near the ceiling still showed a sporadic hand with a trumpet, or a dove with a halo. The high windows had been boarded up, a few glaring lamps put in. The soldiers herded the conscripts against the walls with their bayonets and retreated to the centre of the room where the sergeant shouted:

"Outer clothes off. Keep socks and shoes on!"

Slowly Sander started unbuttoning his shirt. The only one talking softly was Quiff: he stood on the other side of the room near Bandid who was leaning across a boxhorse, sobbing. Sander looked at the twins who stood next to him. One of them took off his hat and offered his hand.

"Allow us, Broodman," he said, "our name is Ankersmit." His brow was high, but of a sterile smoothness. The other, whose look was more fierce, also took off his hat. "Kees," he said, "Hein," the first.

Sander offered a left and a right hand.

"You know me?" he asked.

"We live not far from you," Kees said and started to undress.

"Most often we sit behind the window. We used to see you walk by before, tightly embracing a girl, a nice thing, she wore her hair in a bun on the top of her head, but in the last while you were always alone."

A shot rang out, followed by a sharp crack and spluttering plaster near the head of Bandid. Screaming, half undressed, Bandid collapsed next to the

boxhorse.

"What are you doing to me, what on earth are you doing to me?" he whimpered and folded his hands.

"If you don't get undressed immediately," the red-haired soldier shouted at Quiff, who was standing close to Bandid and was still wearing his overcoat, "I'll shoot you in the balls and make them fly out the window!"

The soldiers laughed. Quiff started to tremble. Slowly he unbuttoned his coat, keeping his eyes fixed on the soldier.

"What is the matter, Broodman?" Hein asked. "Are you frightened? They are only swaggerers, those soldiers."

As if he would presently use it to hit somebody, Sander stood holding his shirt in his hands.

"You saw her?"

"Certainly. She had very sensible eyes." Hein glanced at his brother; then said: "Yet we distrusted her."

"Say!" one of the soldiers shouted. "You guys hurry up too!"

Clenching his jaws, Sander undressed. The twins had won; carefully he avoided looking them in the eye. Now he had to be careful: they had made him vulnerable on all sides, him, the dancer. He felt an intense shame in their presence.

On the parquet floor, which had been destroyed by thousands of cigarette-butts and boots, many were already standing with an air of cheerful attentiveness waiting for things to come. Some were wearing small briefs and puffed out their chests; others were in Jaeger, buttoned up to their navels, and in flabby drawers halfway down to the knee. Bandid appeared in yellowish long johns of thick fabric. He and Quiff were getting surly looks: an adversity

and audacity like these two displayed brought along danger for all of them. The twins had to contend with inadequately cut flies and had to pull their pants to the side in order to keep their privates hidden from view. When the conscripts were ordered from the room by the sergeant, they were no longer surrounded, and the soldiers carried their guns on their backs. Indeed, who would want to flee in his underpants? Stripped of the most important part of their personalities, their clothes, they had fallen from the familiar world into an emptiness, and nothing could keep them going other than rowing quickly with the flow--while their clothes were locked into closets by an old corporal, together with their schoolbooks, their youth societies, their ideals and parents. There they went, among gypsum pillars: already almost straight, only bothered by their shoes which still made the old sound, an old world on their feet. They would have preferred to take those off as well.

They went up one of the stairways, whose railings were almost all broken; from big holes in the steps a hollow, dark room, full of dust and cobwebs, leered out. Sander avoided the twins and walked next to Quiff who was wearing light blue underwear and had put a comb into his sock. His hair was impeccable again, pushed up into the momentum of the nations.²² Sander looked at the copulating figures on the plaster of the walls and fought his memory: today in particular he had no use for her. The Ankersmits had seen her, they knew how she wore her hair and what kind of eyes she had--it was as if they had their fingers in his ears and eyes and nose.

The soldiers talking and laughing behind them and in front of them, they

²² "We want to push Holland high up, right into the momentum of the nations." Lodewijk van Deyssel (pen name for Karel J. L. Alberdinck Thijm, 1864-1952) in *Nieuw Holland*, 1884. Translated by Jo Mayo, "A New Literature" in *Harvest of the Lowlands*, ed. J Greshoff (New York: Querido, 1945): 118-23.

walked along a busy passage where the sergeant ordered them to sit down on the benches between the doors. Loud conversations were being held in the rooms, and typewriters were rattling. Morse signals sounded from a half-open door, different all the time, high, low, then suddenly loud dance music, disappearing before an urging voice in a foreign language. Somebody next to a radio was feeling bored. A soldier ran by and two doctors in coats stained with blood crossed the passage. A bomber thundered low over the building, followed seconds later by another. Among these goings-on most of them were being bothered by nervousness again. Then they looked at a girl of a women's brigade, who came by, limped by, on one leg and two crutches, and with a helmet on her head. Nervously, the boys looked at the single, shapely leg that shuttled up and down between the two crutches which pushed her shoulders up to her ears. Bandid giggled. Sander looked at him gloomily. As he saw him laugh he suddenly remembered a clip of the dream which had been broken off by the arrival of the sergeant... In an attic, Ena laughingly shows him her ten fingers... Immediately it faded away; like a dying bird she remained hanging in the tree of his thinking. Sander opened his eyes wide.

The sergeant called off names and left down the corridor with half of the conscripts; Bandid was the last one and looked around helplessly to Quiff who gave him a reassuring nod, like someone who held some power. Sander discovered a feeling of desolation within himself when the sergeant had disappeared around the corner. Because he knew him longest? Possibly because of that tenseness in his black face, from which perhaps a big help could suddenly appear. To his left and right the bench was empty; the twins were sitting some way off and were talking softly to each other. He tried to think, but his brain refused and held only a sharp fear. With all his might he resisted

the words and sentences that appeared in him, shreds from well-thumbed letters in a round hand. He looked at his naked legs. They bothered him. He leant against the wall and sat on his hands. At all cost, he should restrain himself and keep everything under control. The others started feeling more and more at home. Some were engaged in conversation with the soldiers; the boy with the downy, irregular moustache held a gun in his hands like a precious gem, and looked at it with respectful interest. When a machine-gun started rattling outside, another boy said laughingly:

"Ratatatatat."

Then Sander heard his name come at him like a foreign swearword. A soldier with one arm and a bandaged head stood in an open doorway and read off their names. One after the other they shuffled into a little room, the floor of which was covered with tufts of bloodied cotton wool and gauze; next to a paintless kitchen table, covered with rusty tins, bottles of beer, syringes, ampoules, stubbed-out cigars, enemas, partly eaten kippers, stood a giant of a man wearing a grimy white coat and boots; he had a belt with a gun around his waist. When the few soldiers, who had entered with them, had heavily-handedly moved the conscripts into a line, he started to look into the mouths and to listen with one ear at the chests; after that he pulled away the underpants and carefully inspected what unfolded before his eyes. Hein laughed and looked at his brother when it was his turn. "G 3," called the physician to the one-armed one who had sat down behind an old-fashioned roll-top desk; or: "G 4";--perhaps not a soul on earth knew which was better. One after the other, a soldier pushed them through a doorway, beyond which it was pitch-dark. Quiff disappeared. The Ankersmits disappeared. Sander started to tremble.

"Come on, come on," said a voice from the darkness when it was his turn. The door closed behind him. "This way."

"Yes," he said.

It was as if he held the blackness in his hands like skeins of wool. Someone grabbed his shoulder. Feeling as if the floor were cluttered with tree-roots, he let himself be guided. Suddenly he was shoved into something; against his back he felt something cool, immediately something slid against his chest. With his mouth open he held his breath. Something buzzed.

"All right."

He was pulled away from the other side. He felt an immense joy. Nothing to worry about, he thought; I must lose myself in this completely, not think about anything but what is happening now: then I can take it. A door opened and the light crashed in like a scream. Blinded, he was pushed out; he groped about, squinting fiercely. Then someone grabbed him and fingers opened his eyes forcefully, so wide, that they nearly fell out. A light, a thousand times more terrible, drowned the first. He screamed. Right in front of his face a mad glare flashed towards him; a black dot approached, receded, approached... He was dragged away. With his hands over the two balls of pain in his head, he was thrown among bodies and moans.

And only this: a universe as black as a raven, through which wanders a yellow spot of pain, a privateer, a Greek helmet--slowly, from left to right; it jumps away and returns with little jolts, merging and fading, then again bright and suddenly green, and purple, and red... Other than that, only a joy in the pain, which helped him. He would allow more, pain up to his ears.

"Control yourself," a voice said.

Sander held his hands around his eyes like a telescope and tried to see

something.

"Control yourself, dammit." It was Quiff who grabbed him under his armpits and pulled him up. He held his eyes tightly shut.

The others, too, scrambled to their feet, one after the other. Shiny steel all around. With difficulty Sander looked around him at the cubicle. They were standing close together; the twins were rubbing their eyes with their fists like toddlers. It seemed to Sander as if he could only distinguish by the lamp which way was up or down. Next to it was a stationary fan. He leant his naked back against the steel and the cold gave him a pleasant feeling.

"Darn it, I felt that, guys," said the boy who wanted to join the navy. "What do you think this is?"

"Whatever it may be," said Quiff, "it is the miscarriage of a degenerate brain, which has built its nest in the cloacas of the mind."

There was a momentary silence. Then the boy with the little moustache said:

"Say, shouldn't you shut your big trap by now?"

"Your name?" Quiff asked harshly.

"That's none of your damn business. My name is Piet Waal, you had better remember that. You probably think that you can say anything you like in your girl's underwear. I'm only warning you. There is still us to reckon with."

Quiff crossed his arms and kept silent like a king. The eyes got a little better. Nothing happened.

"Say Piet," someone else ventured a little later, when the silence that had set in invited jokes, "those two are bound to become generals, both of them." He indicated the twins and started to laugh loudly.

"You might as well forget about officer's training," Piet again addressed Quiff.

"And that has always been your innermost wish, Quiff," Sander said.

"Yes, we must become generals, Kees," Hein said suddenly. "The generals Ankersmit. Long live the army. Long live our boys," he said. "Hurray."

The others looked at him mockingly, but he whispered in Sander's ear:

"This can't hurt. There is a microphone down there."

As if by accident, Sander looked at the place indicated. Almost invisible, like a mouse hole, he saw the instrument there. Frightened, he looked at Quiff. But he had seen it too.

"Crimine ab une disce omnes," he said loudly. "Into the shit with your microphones!"

Immediately something started to flap and blow; all looked up at the fan. After a few seconds it was no longer visible. Then something started squirting in, a green vapour. With dripping runners it sank down the walls and enclosed them in a wide embrace. Soon it grabbed their throats and eyes. Kees Ankersmit started to cough. The smoke quickly gained density, the lamp faded and became a far melancholy star. The cubicle was piled full of coughing and throat-clearing, one after the other they slipped to the floor. Sander kept his head firmly in a corner, but the vapour crept between his fingers and eyelids and gnawed at his eyes. Water streamed down his cheeks, it was as if his lungs would burst, the acid burned on his tongue. It was a mixture of everything: gunsmoke, the smell of blood, gasses... He pressed his face into the crook of his arm, but it didn't make any difference, he wanted to be happy in this misery, but it didn't help him anymore; images appeared before his eyes as he sank to the floor: battlefields, tanks roaring from forests, burning villages,

people, their arms raised, being scorched in phosphorous and nuclear fire... When he felt the muscles of his bladder and anus relax, the murmur diminished; then it was gone for a moment, started again. From another world wind blew in, fresh air, the door opened and two proboscideans jumped inside, crouched near the blind, coughing conscripts and listened at their chests, looked into their throats, peered into their eyes. Then soldiers dragged them out of the cubicle, pressed moist cloths against their eyes and led them away one by one, stumbling, heads bent.

Sander felt a doorstep and heard loud laughter.

"And here we have the prize-dancer!"

He discerned the amusement of Bandid. Hands pulled him onto a bench where he leant forward onto his knees and pressed the cloth against his eyes.

"Do another dance for us!" Was that Bandid again? "Otherwise it'll go bang, bang!"

Looking was impossible. The cloth dripped and he rubbed his cheeks. Suddenly he started to think. He thought: It has always been like this. There may be just wars, necessary wars, defensive wars, but I loathe a world in which wars exist, be they a thousand times just in that world. And if it only ended with war! If there weren't any wars, there would at least be peace. He opened his eyes behind the cloth. During a war it only appears more sharply for a short while. It?... Yes, her eyes had been sensible. And yet the Ankersmits had distrusted her. There you were. They were more dead than alive, they had been consolidated in each other, but were dyed in the wool and sat behind the window: maybe they knew all that is under the earth and on the bottom of the sea... He, Sander, he suspected it: distrust of everything and of himself was inside him like a lump, and he felt how lonely and suspicious he

would remain as long as there was no peace within peace, as long as sense turned out to be unreliable and not a thing equal to itself...

He removed the cloth and looked around.

"Good morning!" called Bandid.

A rectangular waiting-room, before perhaps a room for lackeys in waiting; they were sitting on two benches facing each other, including the boys from the first group who were turning their fingers in their ears. Only Piet Waal was still bent over, pressing the cloth tight against his face: his mouth with the little moustache was twisted in pain.

"Have you had the ear inspection yet?" asked the boy with the wide, turned-up nose, who wanted to buy a motorcycle later.

"No, what's that like?"

"Well, you enter this iron cell with round walls, a sort of sphere. There you get a telephone. Then, through a loudspeaker comes this noise, lordalmighty, cannons, jets, explosions, machine-guns, screaming of people, you kill yourself laughing, you think you'll go crazy. And it keeps reverberating around the walls. You hold your fingers to your ears, but it's no use. Then, very softly, poems are being recited over the telephone, you have to repeat them, but you're going mad with all that noise and you hear almost nothing of them."

"Poems?"

"Yes, poems."

"By whom?" asked Quiff.

"What do I know. You needn't know that, either."

"They rhyme, in any case," said a second.

"I am the daughter of earth and water," said a third, "and the nursling of

the sky. That's how it starts."²³

There was thundering laughter. When everyone stopped, Hein Ankersmit was still laughing. When Sander looked at him, he moved over and whispered:

"I was just reminiscing with Kees. As my rod was being inspected just now, it crossed my mind. Our mother died at our birth, but our father is still a very vivacious man. Well, there are two ladies boarding at our house, and one night my father had joined them, we hadn't failed to notice that. A short while later, however, we heard thumping and shouting. We opened our door, and there we saw our father rushing down the stairs completely naked and with his arms raised. "I am free! I am free!" he shouted with joy. Probably the ladies had started an argument over him; like: me first--no, me." He started to laugh again, but his brother gazed at the floor gloomily. He saw that and said: "Kees is a bit of a mother's boy."

Sander got scared of them--a fear not of what they could do (would they ever be able to do anything?), but of what they were. Did they know? Were they baiting him? He turned away and looked at an officer who had come in, a puffed-up man, waxen, but with sickly red cheeks. He greeted them cheerfully, calling them "friends," and took up a conversation with a couple of boys with a kind of jolly seriousness. On his sleeve, Sander noticed a small, black cross. A little later, the giant with the pistol-belt appeared on the threshold. He looked over the benches and went to Piet Waal who still could not see.

"Paws down," he said and yanked him up. He jerked the cloth away, which caused Waal to blink wildly and pull faces. The physician pulled the lids away and growled:

²³ "I was born from the sun's rays / And from a sigh of the seething sea." From "Iris," a poem by Jacques Perk (1859-1881), based on Shelley's "The Cloud."

"You come along with me now," he said and pushed him out of the room by the shoulder.

"There you are," said Bandid. "Declared unfit."

"How do you know?"

"In our group two went the same way. One had consumption, the other venereal disease, the guy who wanted to join the navy. You should have seen that!"

"What do I hear about venereal disease?" Sticking his nose ahead, the pastor approached. "Who has venereal disease here?"

"Nobody here, sir."

"You'd better not. Sexual intercourse before marriage--you know the story on that, don't you boys?"

There was a dejected silence.

"Don't you, boys?" he repeated, raising his voice.

"But we are allowed to be killed before marriage?" Quiff inquired.

The chaplain looked at him and swallowed. Around his neck shone an exceptionally high decoration: the silver crucifix with the oak leaves and swords.

"Say, bungler, what has got into you? I shall report this! You are an under-age lad, called up by the government, which you are not even entitled to elect yet!"

"Then that government isn't entitled, either, to elect me for death!"

Listlessly Sander listened to Quiff and the chaplain. The conversation was pointless. One should laugh at him, beat him to death, or be silent. The man of God looked around and saw faces that expected much from his answer. He changed his tack and started to laugh heartily.

"You are an idealist, aren't you? Yes, admit it! But remember, then, the word from the Holy Scripture, that the Kingdom of Heaven is not of this world. Then don't you think that it is vain and blasphemous to want to establish Heaven here on earth? Wouldn't you rather believe that ~~every~~ attempt toward it must be fought, sword in hand, in the Name of God the Lord, who is Love?"

At this moment the sergeant astonished the boys by sweeping aside the pastor, who far outranked him, with one wave of his arm and immediately giving the order to retreat. In the passage all the soldiers in their rags and bandages had been assembled again. Rubbing their eyes and fiddling in their ears, the conscripts walked behind the sergeant through the destroyed passages and came into an empty hall where an unshaved, helmeted lieutenant, his arms crossed, was leaning against one of the boarded-up windows. There was a penetrating lysol smell. At the bottom of one of the side walls the plaster had been knocked off over the entire breadth, exposing the bricks underneath; the parquet in front of it was very clean and bleached. With their rifles across their chests the soldiers herded the conscripts over there, and the lieutenant observed them without moving.

"Quite a sturdy bunch," he said to the sergeant.

"Only he..." said the sergeant, pointed to Bandid and wiggled his hand doubtfully.

Bandid took a quick step forward.

"I don't know what's going to happen, sir, but..."

"Lieutenant!" screamed the sergeant. "Bastard!"

"...lieutenant... Of course: lieutenant; I beg your pardon, lieutenant. But why should I..."

"Excellent, excellent," said the lieutenant, "turn up your right trouser-leg. Turn around!" he commanded. "Everybody face the wall, arms over your head!"

Shivering with fear, Sander turned around and looked into the plaster, which was greasy and dirty like the wallpaper above his bed. Nobody spoke. Behind him people were walking up and down, metal was clicking.

"Is it okay if I take him, lieutenant?" The voice of the redhead.

"Alright. And stand stock-still, you, watch it!"

Sander's knees started to knock against the wall. What was going to happen? He pulled his head back a little and looked into the glass of his wristwatch which had a black dial. Small and distorted he saw the soldiers, kneeling down, the rifles at their shoulders. His throat contracted, he wanted to scream, his forehead banged against the wall...

"Now!"

The shots roared and he crashed to the ground, as a claw grazed his calf. His stomach turned and he grabbed his leg; in a thick stream the warm blood ran over his hands. He didn't scream, but wept, with his eyes, his nose and his mouth. Nobody screamed--suddenly they started: short sobs, then long, shrieking howls. He felt overwhelmed by something, not only by the pain. If only he were alone. Alone, it would be bearable. The others compromised and insulted him. Their desperation intensified his, and from his pity he felt a deep hatred surge against them. His pain drowned in it. There they lay, screaming and squirming! There Bandid sat howling, half against the wall; there the twins were embracing; there Quiff lay folded around his leg, his teeth clenched, but his face distorted. Quiff! That was Quiff! Why didn't he laugh and say: "I don't feel anything!"--like a superterrestrial being? He too! Consumed by hatred and anger, and then by the pain too, he embraced his red

leg and felt himself getting nauseous quickly. He broke out in a sweat and, with sunken eyes, he stared across the swaying room. The laughing soldiers bounced to and fro, and look there, Quiff suddenly stood up, his head thrown back. Sander cheered. "Shoot again," said Quiff. "Make yourselves ridiculous once again!" Staggering, Sander stood upright, joy reaching his throat. "Hurray!" he shouted. "We are free!" He spread his arms and fell forward with a bang.

II

"... It had an inside, Ena, but no outside; now it's everywhere..."

Sander heard himself say this and opened his burning eyes. Immediately, the pain returned, but bearable. The hunger was worse; he was shivering with cold. Like a monument, the sergeant rose at his feet: filthy bandages, a stretch of bare leg, then the rag-uniform; very high up, the black face. What kind of face was that? It contained a great deal of destruction, but also a weakness, a tenseness near the mouth.

"What is it?" Sander asked. "Did you say something?"

"No. You have to get up."

He spoke calmly.

"What time is it?"

"You have a watch."

It was ten o'clock. His hands were red and sticky; there was vomit on his chest and pants. He sat up cautiously. Like a white log his leg lay stretched out, bandaged from the ankle to the knee. Carefully he tried to move it.

Something gnawed, that was all. In the crook of his arm he discovered a tuft of cotton wool; he pulled it away and saw a dot of clotted blood. He had been given an injection.

"Do I have to wait much longer?"

"Well, you could help me!"

To his amazement, the sergeant did. Sander limped and anxiously touched the wounded leg to the floor. A stabbing pain shot up to his groin instantly. He pulled it up, but the sergeant gave him a push that made him stumble forward and moan.

"Don't muck things up, Broodman. Where do you think you are? Would you like a wheelchair perhaps? We always have those handy on the battlefield too."

Still he wasn't shouting; maybe there was even a gentleness in his look. Sander noticed that the bloodstains had been scrubbed off already.

"Where are the others?" he asked. "Or have I been declared unfit?"

Seeking support from the wall of the hallway, he stumbled on. The sergeant didn't reply. From downstairs came talk and laughter and the sound of an harmonica. In the distance there was shooting. Sander pulled a face. Nothing else existed in the world but these buildings, where the soldiers were singing and shots were ringing. Nowhere were women shopping anymore, not a gardener was crawling through the beds and the roses, nowhere was a girl doing her hair in front of a broken mirror, on which was written in lipstick: Sander was here--coquettish, but often impatient because it wouldn't go right on the first try; some days it worked better than others: if she had her period it was a disaster, it seemed like hemp then. Nobody could make such a complicated knot on the head with that... Sander looked along the wide, marble

steps of a stairway: a whale's mouth, decorated with golden curls and beheaded caryatids. A little longer and he would start to wail like a child. He pressed his jaws together and limped down the stairs. The railing had been broken off. The windows were boarded up.

At the door to a storage room a bent, toothless corporal handed him a uniform without insignia--the interregnum of the underpants had ended. While he started struggling into it, the sergeant chatted with the mumbling old man. Soon they were talking about soccer.

When he no longer saw his bandaged leg and felt the support of the clothes all over, his walking improved a little. He had long ago lost his bearings; it was probable that walls had been knocked out to connect the buildings and he might already be in one of the next ones: Rehoboth or Ir-Nahash. In front of an open door a soldier stood on guard; where his nose had been he was wearing a pink plastic plate which also replaced his upper lip. Behind him Sander saw cellar stairs--deep down, underneath glaring lights stood an intricate instrument panel, at which men in white coats were working; in the middle was a pit surrounded by railings from which a bright, azure light rose up.

"Hoogaheag!" the soldier called.

Sander understood that he had to look ahead. He sucked in deeply the fresh air which rose from the cellar, as after a thunderstorm. Ozone, he thought, O₃. On the other side of the passage stood a row of blackened pieces of wood, man-sized, no, more than that: they were human silhouettes: trunk, head, limbs, some raising a grotesque arm up in the air and bending sideways as if they were fending off something terrible; a few straight up, standing to attention. A twist of satisfaction appeared around the sergeant's mouth when

he didn't ask anything. He smelled food.

Through double doors of richly carved wood he came to a room with crystal chandeliers which were hanging crookedly and were black with dirt. Underneath, at long tables on trestles, the boys in uniform were sitting behind their plates of stew. They cheered. Apparently they had considered him declared unfit and had figured they wouldn't see him again. He, in turn, greeted Quiff and the Ankersmits. The sergeant put him next to Bandid and he greedily started eating his stew. There was laughter and shouting. Only Bandid was still talking about the shooting-match:

"How about that, Broodman? The sergeant thought I wouldn't be able to stand it, but you fainted!" Laughing, he gave a nod to the others.

Sander didn't reply. The half-naked one might have done better by shooting him down in the police van. He looked at Quiff in his oversized uniform and saw how the emptiness around him became even larger. He was eating slowly and didn't look up from his plate. Hein Ankersmit was staring blankly in front of him, not eating. Now and again, Kees looked at him anxiously and whispered something, but he didn't seem to hear. Sander drank some water and ate. Suddenly he felt tears running from his eyes. Shocked, he wiped them away. What was weeping inside him? Violently he suppressed his thoughts and the face which appeared inside him, always framed differently: angry at the beach, laughing in the living-room, begging on a pillow (hair hanging down)... He lost his taste for the stew, but forced himself to eat more. Stew, stew. He shouldn't give in to those feelings, he had to think; his thoughts led him away from the people and made him strong--his feelings united and weakened him with the suffering of hordes of Dutch, Russians, French, Jews, Aztecs... Stew. Stew. It came with a glass of water and was

eaten with a spoon. When two cooks came in, dragging a big kettle to dish out seconds, a door banged against the wall.

"Alarm!" shouted a dishevelled soldier on the doorstep. Other soldiers came in on the double.

Perplexed, the conscripts lowered their spoons.

"We're not ready yet!" Bandid called in a fraternal voice.

The soldiers started pulling the boys off their chairs. The sergeant was holding a gun in one hand and in the other a map which the dishevelled one had handed to him. Gripping the tables, the conscripts limped outside, where a cart with rifles and automatic guns was waiting for them.

"To arms!" roared the sergeant. Sander saw that Quiff hesitated. He went up to him and whispered:

"Don't make things hard on yourself unnecessarily, it is only a test after all."

"Et tu, Brute?" hissed Quiff.

"Don't simplify things so stupidly!" Sander took two rifles and pushed one into Quiff's hands, thinking: He is right, dammit, he is right.

A soldier demonstrated the use of the rifle and the conscripts stood around him on tiptoe. They groped for ammunition from a basket that was being carried around and stuffed their pockets, hung the rifles from their shoulders and loaded machineguns in front of their chests. A child could take off the safety catch. The soldiers, who kept their fingers on the triggers of their weapons, pushed and shoved the boys into a line. Sander found himself next to the turned-up nose, Quiff was at the front.

"I want to be with my brother," Hein called plaintively, almost inaudibly.

"Shut up!"

Puffing, the old corporal came shuffling from the storage room, loaded down with helmets.

"They might catch cold without their little hats," he mumbled and pressed a helmet on each head. Most had the American model, only Sander and Bandid got flat English ones--there were no Russian helmets. The helmets changed their faces--shifted them into the horrific; the eyes became darker, the mouths tightened, the hands grasped the guns with greater determination.

Surrounded by an escort of soldiers, the group started moving down the passages; here and there someone would appear in a doorway and smile. Marching was out of the question, and to stumble in step is not possible, after all, in a world like this one. The square was empty. Limping, the line moved over the tiles and around the corners of the buildings. Sander noticed how an elderly serviceman in battledress walked along with them at a little distance, as if he didn't really belong; his rank was unrecognizable, he was unarmed; an iron hook poked from his left sleeve. Then he looked in between the last two buildings to the other side and saw a row of soldiers lying face down on the tiles, emerging from a slanting shadow, into the sun: dead, sleeping, or puppets. A few boys started to use their rifles as walking-sticks, which the soldiers didn't forbid; furiously Sander saw how in the end only Quiff spurned the support of the rifle and kept stumbling on doggedly. Below the gate, their moans hung like an elephant. Grinning into a colourful comic, a soldier emerged from the sentry box and opened the gate without looking up.

Outside, Sander noticed that the weather was beautiful. The sun was shining on a concrete highway which he couldn't place. On the other side, the heavy mass of slow forests which seemed to be putting a hand on his shoulder. As they were crossing, a convertible approached and reduced speed; a well-

dressed, smiling gentleman nodded and motioned to them to cross; a dear old lady next to him stretched her neck and looked proudly at the boys.

With the dangling machine-gun in one hand, and in the other the helpful rifle, they stumbled along a sandy path between cool, living dens of shade, trunks, smells; innocent back to their origin, the birds and bees were singing in the foliage and the flowers, flies were dancing in slanting pillars of sunlight. From the soldiers, who were walking through the ferns alongside the path and were holding their weapons aimed at them, Sander looked at the forest, and then again at the soldiers. We outnumber them, he thought--a shoot-out... Panting and groaning, step by step, the conscripts dragged themselves over the uneven ground. The sergeant didn't seem to be bothered by his wounds. He looked at the map, and thrust himself into the bushes. On the soft moss and earth, where the pain bounced away into the soil, the turned-up nose whispered suddenly:

"Say, did you see the cellar stairs with the sentry?" Sander nodded. "You know what that is?"

"Well?"

"Nuclear energy." The boy wanted to look sinister, but he started to laugh.

"How do you know?"

"My friend. He was inspected a month ago. But you mustn't speak about it to anybody. In some kind of pit they position someone in front of a wooden partition, then they plug in and he simply evaporates. The partition does too--only where his shadow was, something remains. That's it. Well?"

Sander watched a squirrel that spiralled its way quickly up a tree-trunk, looked around it from the right, looked around it from the left, ran across a

branch and floated into the foliage. The forest was breathing and dreaming. Then, from the tail end of the group, they heard a weak cry. A soldier shouted something, the sergeant turned around. Hein Ankersmit was lying in the grass on his back, pale as a fish.

"Pooped out!" said the soldier.

"Kees!" Hein called, his eyes staring. "Where is my brother? Let go of those spiders and take the sun away!" he moaned suddenly and groped through the air. "Hello father, hello mother... mother... yes! yes! Kees, Kees, come quickly! Look! There! There is a hole in the heavens and a ballet master is looking through!" He laughed, but instantly tears rolled from his eyes. "Kees, where are you?" he whined.

"Here, look. Look at me, Hein, I'm here."

"Kees! Kees! I am waiting for you, why don't you come?" Suddenly he was singing, a children's song: "Ready or not, here I come!" Fever glowed in his face.

The serviceman motioned with his hook and the sergeant pointed to a soldier who flung Hein across his back. Stumbling, he started to walk back.

"I must stay with my brother," Kees said and wanted to follow the soldier. The sergeant grabbed his ear.

"You keep your trap shut and get into line."

Kees trembled and lifted his machine-gun, but immediately he got a punch in the face that made him cry out and made blood spurt from his nose.

"Do not reach too high, boy," the sergeant said calmly.

"Kees! Kees!" Hein called from the distance. His helmet had fallen off his head and was lying in the grass, rocking slightly. The soldier disappeared among the bushes.

A few minutes later they passed a motionless, black pond, surrounded by man-sized rhododendrons, full of white and ~~mauve~~ flowers; on the ground naked stems wrestled together, grotesque and primeval. Java, Sander thought-- Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Halmahera... and a stick which slid across a shiny map in a classroom filled with the light of winter and boys, the airplane nose down in the clouds. After a while the ground started to rise, the trunks got skinnier, the grass thin and pale. The sergeant put the map inside his rags, bent over and made a sweeping movement with his arms behind his back. Relieved that there would apparently be an end to the painful promenade, the conscripts tottered around each other and spread in a wide line among the feathered trees. The sergeant lay down on the ground and started crawling like a lizard. Without being ordered to do so, the boys imitated him. On Quiff's face Sander saw a crooked grin at the display. The soldiers lay down, too, but didn't crawl on; they checked their carbines and held them loosely in their hands, each keeping an eye on two or three of the boys. The serviceman in battledress sat down against a tree and lit a cigarette. A straight, overgrown ditch bounded the forest; the sergeant slid into it and waved. Sander ended up next to him.

"Rifles over the edge," he commanded in a low, but sharp voice. "Stenguns ready to fire at your elbow."

The conscripts lay down behind their weapons and searched for a spot for their wounded legs. A stubble field, overgrown with thistles and dandelions, stretched a couple of hundred metres to the forest on the other side: a greyish-green coniferous forest without bushes. To its left and right, the field was also locked in by woods.

"We have information," said the sergeant, "that the enemy will attack

right in front of us. Whoever sees movement may not shoot, but must report it immediately. Shoot only at my command." He looked at his watch, a thick, silver lump with a lid, from grandfather's days. "The exact time of the action is not known, but it can start any moment now."

Action? Enemy? It was a ditch to make love in, Sander thought. The grass was long and of a soft, indecent species. He looked down the line. Quiff was leaning his chin in his hands and looking over the land, bored; Bandaïd, his flat helmet over one ear, was pulling a face as if he would presently fall asleep. But Kees Ankersmit was shading his eyes, holding one hand on his gun and peering down the edge of the forest, his face contorted with effort, his chin and neck red with blood. He no longer seemed to think about his brother.

Sander felt the urge to lie on his back and sunbathe. His leg was silent and the helmet protected his eyes, but wasn't bothering him otherwise. He looked across the field to the surrounding woods. Inside the rectangle peace was alive; never had nature more embraced and sheltered him. Not a sound could be heard; only the birds were singing behind him: they sang in contest with the silence and deepened it. The silence could be heard, a slight pressure on his ears, full of reassurance. He smiled. He was dressed up like a soldier in a foolish but forgotten whim. The thistles had sprung up from the soil: small and strong as eternity. The field rippled to the woods, the trees leaped up to the sun which revolved in the blue like a man who likes to forget himself. Everything was right, everything was exquisite and good. He started to doze, and, in a deep digestion, he felt his sorrow flow out of him...

When he looked at his watch, three quarters of an hour had passed. It was a good thing the enemy stayed away. He couldn't come anymore, he had already been beaten, crushed ignominiously by the earth on which he had

dared set his unworthy feet. Sander looked around. The soldiers would shoot them in the back if they refused to advance. Such was war. Enemies shot each other in the chest, allies in the back in an even more dangerous, reverse enmity, called friendship. But there couldn't be war, the sun and the trees prevented it; there would never be war, there had never been war. War was not possible--a child could prove that.

He gasped. There it went! In the distance between the trees! Before he realized it, he had nudged the sergeant.

"There! A little child!" He pointed at it, but his finger seemed to push it away between the spruces.

"Where is it? Quick!"

"It's gone, I don't see it anymore. It was a little boy about five years old, it was running."

The sergeant looked at him inquisitively, and asked the others:

"Did anyone else see anything?"

Nobody had seen anything; the boys gave Sander a surly look. Kees Ankersmit even said:

"I deem it impossible, that anything should have escaped my attention."

The sergeant looked at Sander again, and then threw a quick glance back, to the serviceman, who sat leaning against the tree. He fell silent and looked at the forest again.

When Sander looked back, he saw two eyes aimed at him. His legs stretched out and his arms crossed, a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, his head slightly cocked against the smoke, the serviceman was looking at him: quietly, but expectantly too. His eyebrows raised, Sander looked in front of him. He was convinced: a child had gone there, a boy probably, whether they

believed him or not. They could drop dead, anyway. There was no enemy, that had been proved now--little boys were playing in the woods on the other side. As far as he was concerned, they could stay here all day, the sun was at its zenith, half of it was over. He undid the top button of his uniform and pushed his helmet back a little. In his back he felt the eyes of the hook-hand. He looked at an ant, which struggled through the forest of grass, the endless wilderness. "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"²⁴ Before, he thought, he would have taken out his magnifying glass and forced the sun to scorch the animal in a hellish spot. Nothing prevented that, and the sun could be forced. It would shrivel as it charred and a wisp of smoke would rise up from a dot of black ashes...

"Van Halem, Kessel, Ankersmit, De Jong--take aim!"

The ditch was filled with excited movement. Astonished, he saw the four boys shoulder their rifles. With a jerk of his head he looked to the other side. A man was standing near a pine-tree. He was holding something in his hands. A weapon? A walking-stick? Was he wearing a uniform? It could not be distinguished. He was looking around; maybe he was calling something. It could not be heard.

"Fire!"

The shots rang out. A second later, the man fell forward and lay motionless. Then Sander didn't see him anymore; in his gray clothes he merged with the soil.

"Excellent," the sergeant said. "And now pay even more attention. It is going to start."

²⁴ The text here reads: "Mr. Livingstone, I presume?", a misquotation which the translator saw fit to correct.

Nobody spoke. Panting, Bandid peered at the forest, Quiff was still leaning his chin in his hands and didn't move. Yes. Kees Ankersmit spoke. He rubbed his shoulder and said:

"I am convinced that it was my bullet which killed him."

"Come on, you're crazy!" the other three called. "Wouldn't you like that! Not on your life!"

"If you don't shut up, I'll stuff a grenade between your molars!" shouted the sergeant.

Open-mouthed, Sander looked at Ankersmit. What had come over him? Like a bird of prey, his face covered with blood, he peered to the other side. Once again Sander felt himself becoming scared, but it was a different kind of fear from a couple of hours ago, when Hein had still been there. Hein? Where was Hein? What would happen to Kees without Hein? He had his finger on the trigger; a triumphant smile moved around his mouth. Confused, Sander looked at the other side. His fear was growing. Over there were the pine-trees. The enemy had shown himself. Shaking, he looked at the silent, threatening forest. Each tree could be hiding a sniper: crouching, waiting for the signal to attack. The shots had betrayed them. Why didn't they crawl on to another spot? Deep inside the forest, tanks might already be approaching, slow and unstoppable: heavy, implacable manifestations of... of what? Of the enemy!

Sander clasped his rifle. He was not alone. His pockets were filled with bullets, the gun was within reach. The sun was scorching hot like a beast; not a bit of wind. The forest stood motionless. He gripped his weapon even tighter in order to suppress the shaking of his hands. Squinting, he looked over the land. Maybe... maybe this whole forest was a gigantic camouflage! Maybe it

would presently burst open like a wall, the cardboard trees would bang to the ground and from an immense complex of wheels and steel, fire would shoot towards them in a murdering judgment, airplanes sweep over them amidst flames, bullets and rockets, the sky become a chaos of scrap, the sun fall to the earth and an atomic fungus appear monumentally where only their shadows remained intact.

And there it was already! A shriek, turning into a roar, bewitched the sky, something black shot up from behind them, straight over the trees and their heads, and sped across the field above its shadow. He felt how he wet his pants. Above the forest, the jet swept upwards in a spasm and dropped something, something luminous, which floated in the air. The machine kept on rising and swung back in a wide angle.

"Van Dam, Meier, De Groot, Hagedoorn, Van Waveren ten Cate--guns!"

Hurriedly the boys put their rifles against the bank and grabbed their stenguns.

"Sit down against the other bank!"

Half sitting, half standing against the slope, the guns in front of their chests, they were sweating and waiting. Bandid was panting and licked his lips. Far away, over the woods, the plane disappeared like a dark thunderstorm. The flare descended slowly and floated off course, very quietly, a second, uncertain sun, an immense sign, an index finger...

There it came from among the trees, small and running: the little boy. Trotting closer across the quiet plain like a last giver of meaning, the light above the trees... With a hard blow, ~~the sergeant hit the rifle~~ from Sander's shoulder, where, in a spasm, he had been aiming it, one eye shut... Shaking, Sander grabbed his head. Would he have fired? Would he have fired? His eyes

bulging, he stared at the little boy. It ran as fast as it could. In the belt of its shorts, it had a wooden sword, in its hand a forage-cap made out of newspaper. Stupefied, the conscripts looked at the sergeant, and at Sander, too. Huffing and puffing, the child jumped across holes. It was very close now. The sergeant didn't say anything. A little later, it jumped into the ditch and tumbled over Quiff, who was lying motionlessly, his head in his hands. With a shout it flopped forward.

"Brands! Body-search!"

Quiff turned his head, gave the sergeant a short look and then slowly took his helmet off his head. He put it on the edge of the ditch, pulled the comb from his sock and started to style the flattened wave with careful fingers.

Furiously the sergeant gave the same order to the turned-up nose. The latter grabbed the little boy who sat looking around, panting and speechless, and tried to squeeze his hands into the tiny pockets of its shorts. From these he extracted: a small ball of putty, a piece of string, a shriveled chestnut and some sticky candies. He let his hands go over its whole body.

"Nothing. I can't find anything."

"Ask him where he comes from."

"Where do you come from?"

"Yes sir."

"I am asking where you come from!"

"Yes sir." It started to laugh a little.

The turned-up nose made a helpless gesture to the sergeant.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"Yes sir!" The little boy smiled broadly and grabbed its little sword.

"Have a look at that newspaper," said the sergeant.

The turned-up nose folded out the hat, while the little boy looked on in a daze. With a jerk he got up.

"A plan!"

"Pass down."

Every boy took a quick glance at it as it was passed down. In blue pencil someone had drawn a block of buildings; at some points there were question marks inside red circles. The sergeant moved his finger over the drawing. Suddenly he crumpled the newspaper into a ball and said to the little boy:

"Go back and say that it's all right."

"Yes sir."

The little boy scrambled up the bank and ran off as fast as it had come, without its hat, sometimes jumping over a thistle. His teeth biting his lower lip, the sergeant followed it sharply.

"Fire!" he shouted.

It had covered thirty meters by then. The fivesome stiffened.

"Fire! Fire!"

Bandaïd fired. Shaking from tip to toe, he stood behind his barking gun. The others followed suit; the ditch was filled to the brim with noise. In an area as large as the black pond with the rhododendrons, the bullets made the dirt rise in clouds. Within them, the little boy made a great leap, higher than it had ever jumped before.

"Enough!"

The four stopped, but Bandaïd kept shooting, attached to his weapon like a shaking ghost: his head turned away slightly, with bright, destroyed eyes. The dirt didn't rise up near him. Suddenly a second gun started rattling. Quiff.

He was standing up and shooting at Bandid. But simultaneously with Bandid's scream, there was a loud bang, the gun dropped from Quiff's hands and his left arm dangled along his body; moaning, he grabbed his shoulder. A moment later, the red-haired soldier jumped into the ditch and hit Quiff on the head with the butt of his revolver, making the bone crack. With another soldier he quickly dragged him away by his legs.

As in a dream, Sander looked at the commotion. Bandid had a graze across his cheek; thick drops of blood came oozing from a wide, pink gash. Another boy was folded double over his stengun. He wasn't moving and was also carried off. The sergeant said something, and the conscripts took up their positions again.

Senselessly, Sander looked over the land. On the other side was the forest. The crowns of the pines were standing like clenched fists on top of their bald trunks. The thistles clawed out of the ground like the moldy paws of poorly buried animals. The little boy was a soft, red mound between the dandelions. The others too were pale and restless, but for them the danger still had a military nature. Military? Who was the enemy? Sander dug his fingers into the earth. He felt how the sweat on his face dried instantly in the uncontrollable heat... Danger lurked in the trees! In the grass, in the earth, in the sun, in the blue of the sky! The forest was bursting with threat because it was a forest. The grass... it was grass and it was damned! The sun was sun and was damned because of being sun! Everything that lived on earth, and in it, and flew there, and lay dead there, was damned and damned and damned again! The little boy, he was broken, and soaked underneath the sky the earth and the flowers. His teeth started to chatter and he pulled his hands back, shivering, as he looked at the little heap, and back to the thistles, and

to the forest and into the sky, his hands floating... He was still aware of getting up, with short, loud sobs. The grass and the little boy--and he! himself! Then everything crashed together: only the face of the sergeant was still there; life-sized and black. He grabbed at it, put his hands to the cheeks, felt the head between his palms...

"I loved her," he panted, "I loved her with all that I was, and she loved me, just as much, just as much! Why is it gone? Tell me why it is gone, you must say it right now, why was it there at first, and now it isn't anymore? How can it be gone? Tell me! Tell me!"

He started to shake the sergeant and slap his cheeks, but received a hard blow on his ear and tumbled sideways. He didn't notice, he talked on, to the earth, which was right in front of his eyes--hastily, hoarsely, looking feverishly at the sand:

"--I love you more than I can say, you wrote to me. I made mistakes, you made mistakes, but it can't just be gone! It's gone for you, I know! How is that possible if it's impossible? It can't be gone--and it's no longer there! --What does your genius concern me? I live with you as one human being with another. For me, it is corruption. O god, you were right, you were right, but that doesn't change the fact that, nevertheless, nothing can perish! After all, we didn't only love each other because of our good qualities, but also despite the bad! We did love each other, didn't we? --I'll always take care of you, you wrote with your own hands. --Sweetheart, become human and great in your ordinary life, too. You were infinitely right, and I would have, I would have, too--why didn't you wait, five years, ten years, all my life, if you loved me? Didn't you love me? --Even if you had left me pregnant with your child, I would never have had an abortion, never! You wrote that, didn't you, Ena?--

Because the love that was between us will never return with any other. You loved me! And now you don't anymore! But then... then isn't it all the same if you love somebody or not? If it can disappear, then it doesn't make any difference, then isn't it all the same?"

"Control yourself and shut up about that bitch of yours," hissed the sergeant. "Keep an eye on the forest, there's a war on, that's more important than your little fucks."

"It's the same," groaned Sander, pressing his face into the sand. "There is no difference. But it can't be!" he called suddenly. "I deny it because it is impossible! --I'll never leave you, I won't be bought by anybody. I'd rather kill myself working. Well, god in heaven! It's a lie! --Sander, I love you, believe me; otherwise I would never have come back, even if you had written a hundred letters. Then you came back, yes, but the next time you didn't come back. I wrote letters, at first sober, then drunk, and I know that you laughed at me, Ena, when you received them! Well, god in heaven, god in heaven!"

His face covered with sand, he got up and could no longer see for weariness. The serviceman in battledress was crouching next to him and looked at him attentively.

"What then?" he asked.

"I am so tired. I don't remember. Why do you ask?"

His head lolling, he looked into a coarse, pleasant face.

"You can tell me. Continue."

For a second, something like a smile appeared around the mouth, which Sander was clinging to. The serviceman pulled him up by his armpits. He had never felt so sleepy. Like unwilling tools, he had to force his legs to climb out of the ditch. They walked past the soldiers and, a little way off, the

serviceman let him down onto the moss. Still his mouth inclined to a smile: friendly or derisive, Sander couldn't tell.

"Well?"

"When she longed for me," Sander said, as his eyes closed and shots were fired across the stubble field at hordes of children who came swarming out of the woods with wooden shields and green flags, escaped from sandboxes and playgrounds, boys and girls, some wearing bathing suits and sunburned in which fire? which water? which sky?--"she would look at me from below and say: --tcht. I longed for her too, but I didn't do anything. Not always, but sometimes I didn't do anything. Why not?" He opened his eyes and searched for those of the serviceman, but then his eyes closed again. "I didn't want to torment her. Psychologically... I... Maybe revenge... but for what? Why didn't I do anything, while I also wanted to, and loved her as much as I could? Sometimes... she would spend the night, secretly, nobody was allowed to know. --Why do I always have to sneak around that house like a thief? I am already your woman, after all, and did no harm to anybody! Why is that fiddling around necessary? It makes me so miserable... Then sometimes she would wake up and want to smoke a cigarette, but she couldn't find any matches. --Gimme a light, she would say, like a little girl, while she groped about in the room. I would pretend to be asleep, I didn't say anything, I didn't help her. The matches were under my pillow. I loved her so much that I... I pretended to be asleep, I breathed deeply and kept my eyes shut... as if I was asleep... and she wandered around the room... looking for a light... and I... I slept... I..."

... In the back of a room, a stuffy, unfamiliar room, is Ena; her hair has been cut off and styled after the latest fashion.

"It is very becoming," Sander says. "It suits you. God in heaven!" He is

flapping his arms about as if he wants to fly.

"That cut when I was seventeen was awful," Ena says. "This is a lot more awful."

"He was a genius, wasn't he, that limping Yugoslavian spy?"

"O Sander."

"I know all about it!"

"I jumped for pain then, in front of the mirror, you remember that, don't you?"

"Do you love me, Ena?"

She pulls a comb from her shoe and starts combing. Her hair has turned red suddenly.

"You taught me how to eat using a knife and fork, Sander, you were very useful to me. How can I still love you?"

"Who is that man over there?"

"He's my husband now. He's in a business which nobody understands. He has a large income."

"God in heaven! God in heaven!" Flapping, he strikes around. "To the Mediterranean in rental cars, right? Death to all drivers! I am going to kill you!"

"Sander, darling!" She falls around his neck and kisses him.

"O Ena, Ena, sweetheart, little tadpole, why did we ignore each other for so long?... Ena, come! Come!"

"Here?"

"Yes here. Right now. Come!"

"Tcht."

"Tcht, tcht! O Ena... Ena, Ena, here come the spies! Quickly! They're

shooting, the little boy has already turned into pudding with raspberry-sauce!"

"My little boy?"

"I'm a bastard. I'm going to say it... Whore! Whore!"

"Adieu, adieu. In Nice there is not a woman who wears panties."

"Plague, revenge, death, destruction to all men! Ena, you're leaving me, you don't know who I am and what I'll go through!"

"Hahahahaha!"

She laughs, shrilly and long, until it blends into morse signals, low and high, for a moment there is a low voice from a Balkan-state, then dance music plays loudly...

III

Sander opened his eyes. Behind the desk was the serviceman, or... Yes, it was him: in a tight, beige uniform with decorations across his chest, a major, he had a cap on his head and one hand to the dial of a small radio. Absent-mindedly, he nodded to Sander as he met his eyes. Sander was lying on a couch, the buttons of his uniform jacket had been undone. Outside he heard shouting and shooting; also the roar of cannons.

"My god, such harmony !" said the serviceman. He turned off the receiver and folded his hand around his hook. "Well? How is our dear Ena doing?"

Sander sat up and leaned his back against the wall. His leg smarted. On an electric clock he saw that it was four o'clock. He rubbed his face.

"If only these dreams weren't there," he said. "Actually, I've dealt with it already, but these dreams..."

"What did you dream?"

Sander reflected.

"I can't remember," he said. "Nonsense, of course." He looked at the serviceman. "Who are you, anyway?"

"What do you mean, you dealt with it already?"

"Because my Ena is dead." He touched his leg. "The present Ena I only reproach for the murder of the former. But maybe that is unjust; then not a tie links me to her anymore."

"Really?" the serviceman asked with a smile. "Or maybe just one, that her body remained the same?"

Sander shrugged.

"If she were really dead, it would all be a lot simpler. Then my business wouldn't be with Ena, but with death. I can cope with that." Once again, he rubbed his face. He had trouble talking; sleeping hadn't made his weariness any less.

"You're clever." The serviceman leafed through an exercise book and jotted something down. "Continue. Why don't you kill her?"

Surprised, Sander looked at him.

"Because then the problem 'Ena' wouldn't be replaced by the problem 'death', but by the equally detestable problem 'Broodman, murderer'. That way there's no escape at all. It's all ooze." He was silent for a moment. "I am not ashamed of what I said earlier. It's the same for everybody, for her as well. Sometimes she would say that she had a hunch that I would become lame later. Of course, that's what she was hoping for, otherwise you don't get a hunch like that. Then she'd push me around in a wheelchair and really be able to take care of me, she said. I know that she wouldn't even look at me then, and

would roll in the hay with other men. Yet she loved me. It isn't as if she didn't love me because she hoped for, or would do, such things, but she would do them despite the fact that she loved me, or maybe even because she loved me." Again he fell silent. "Ooze," he said. "Everything is contaminated with it, it spoils everything."

The serviceman used his hook to push the bullets from the chamber of his revolver, and started to polish them with his handkerchief.

"Ooze?" he repeated, as if he wasn't paying attention. "Why be so pessimistic? There is also happiness in the world, isn't there? Aren't there also beautiful things in life? Like flowers and art and such? You must be a little bit more positive."

"Do you polish them every day, sir, your bullets?"

With a grin, the serviceman looked at him.

"Excellent," he nodded. "But nevertheless." He held up one bullet, and made the steel shine. Suddenly he looked Sander straight in the eye. "Things are as you want to see them. A naked woman is beautiful and attractive, as long as you don't want to see her as a skin bag stuffed full with bones, muck and shit. One does not exclude the other: the knowledge of one is even necessary in order to maintain the other. But you have to be able to handle your knowledge. You're a bit too young for yourself. Take a surgeon. A surgeon who cannot see a woman without starting to work on her with his scalpel, that's not a surgeon, but a madman. The surgeon comes home and kisses his wife. Is he fooling himself? Not at all. Is he kissing a bundle of muscle and cell tissue? Not at all. He is kissing his wife."

"Really?" Sander asked. "And suppose she just left another man's bed?"

The serviceman heaved a sigh and started reloading his revolver.

"It's all deceit!" Sander called. "When they told me in school, that a human being consists of cells, so beautiful and intricate, even then I felt deceived. At most, the cells are the boundary! Man consists of cell content, of protoplasm, slime, ooze! About which we know not a damn thing and where everything is possible! And that's why we aren't rational beings, but balls of slime!"

With a bang, the serviceman put his gun on the desk.

"And that's why I am in the service. To be able to act. We forgive nobody if we love him. Everything is self-contradictory. You are absolutely right--and yet I know that you are wrong; I just don't know why I know that. Everything is possible for a human being, you cannot make head nor tail of him, except when you have to hang him. Every face is so unique, so clearly the never-to-be-repeated imprint of a soul, a character, a whole life, that it's worth your while to knock each one's brains in separately. And everything is back in the melting pot: religion, philosophy, science... I am curious to see what will come out," he said suddenly in a different voice. "I have great expectations."

"Well, now that's interesting!" Sander called. "That's very interesting. But I don't give a damn! What's in it for me, in this evolution of human thinking, that so captivates you? Soon a nice new instrument will come out of that melting pot, a weapon against facts, and you'll once again be happy. But I won't accept the facts! I'll never, ever, accept them! As long as I can't force things to exist the way they exist here," he shouted and hit his forehead, "I won't rest! Ever!" and then he suddenly fell slack against the wall again. "I've been hurt," he said.

Now he saw the sergeant, who had been silently standing near the door for a while.

"Hurt?"

"Ena made that clear to me. I've always been hurt: by everybody, by everything."

"Ah!" the serviceman said, with a face like a discoverer. "And now you want to get revenge, don't you? And how will you do that? Let me see... By fame, isn't it?" He burst out laughing. "Fame as revenge for the fact that you have been hurt in your humanity, or in your vanity, that's all the same. By your parents, your school, your friends, your neighbours, your Ena. You want to rule! That's fine. But once you get there, supposing you can make it, you'll see that the objects of your revenge are nothing to you, and that's how your revenge, and with it your fame, will become meaningless, and you will find yourself on your throne, even more desolate, more lonesome, more desperate than you are already."

He started to laugh again and included the sergeant in his merriment, who nodded as if he knew all about it.

"Despair, despair, despair," the serviceman said cheerfully and wrote in his exercise book. "That dance of his in the police van, that was nothing but despair. Here we are, Broodman, and now what? Want to seek salvation in everyday life? Weed your little garden? Breed rabbits?"

Sander covered his face with his hands.

"Nothing is left. It isn't the war, or Ena, but the defeat behind it all. Scab has infected it all. I wish I were dead!"

"Then why don't you bump yourself off, my son?"

Dying is the biggest scab of all, haven't you understood that by now? I am caught between my birth and my death; by force I was pushed into this life, I was already screaming in protest when I had only half emerged, my mother told me. By force I'll have to be pushed out, vomiting and swearing. And meanwhile..."

"Meanwhile?"

In a helpless gesture, Sander pulled his hands away from his face.

"...I'll finish my say."

The serviceman lifted the visor of his cap, scratched his head with his third finger and put his cap back on. The sergeant looked at Sander with sparkling eyes; his mouth tensed.

"Can I take him to the practical examination, doctor?" he asked. "The others have started already. Otherwise the whole works will be a mess."

"I am afraid you'll have to do without him."

The sergeant nodded and saluted. After one more glance at Sander he left the room. From the passage shooting and screaming gushed in.

"Listen, Broodman," the serviceman said, "get up and button up your uniform. You're a hopeless case for the time being. What you experienced so far was child's play. We increase everything slowly here: we take a psychological approach, I might say. Well. But you couldn't even handle that; you're nowhere near ready for the rest. I'll declare you temporarily unfit, my boy. You go and have another look at life first." He scribbled in his exercise book, blotted it and filled out a short form. "There you are, for the gate."

Leaning his elbows on the desk, he watched as Sander put it in his

breast pocket.

Alarmed, Sander looked at him. What was this? He felt something inside him tilt over: a violence, it spread and rose. He started to pant and he leant on the desk too. What was happening inside him? All at once he didn't trust anything any more. What kind of injection, he suddenly thought, had he been given while he was unconscious? Was it just starting to take or had it worn off? Again he heard the question, asked so carelessly. What did he want to be? He kept staring at the serviceman, making him flinch. Brown eyes, dull and without any hold. Nowhere a point which gave meaning to the rest, death and defeat. Nowhere a man with a beard, a god, a joker, who could confirm it--and not a woman to be seen, as far as the eye could reach... To be able in two words to say it all, to do it all.

Yehe Aur.

"God," he said, as the cold sweat burst from his body.

Astonished, the serviceman looked at him.

"Well yes," he nodded, "in a sense Christianity can..."

"Not Christianity!" Sander shouted and hit his fist on the table. "To become God!" With a quick movement he grabbed the gun off the table top and aimed it at the serviceman. "And now conjugate! I become God, you become God... and be quick with it!"

"You become God," the serviceman stammered, his hands raised. "He becomes God... we become God--they become God..."

"You become God!"

"You become God--they become God. I became God--you became God--he became God..."

It seemed to Sander as if he radiated light. On reaching the future

tense, as he moved his lips along with the words. The serviceman spoke monotonously, continuously staring into the barrel of the revolver. In time, an ecstatic rigidity came over his face, and, on reaching the future past perfect he started to sway slowly backwards and forwards. He might have been able to continue this grammar until he died, without ever noticing. His voice kept getting softer, but he didn't stop. "Shall I have become God? Will you have become God? Will he have become God?..." Sander allowed him to stop only after the questioning mode of the future past perfect. He had to pull himself away. He wanted to throw the revolver onto the table, but he didn't and limped from the room, as the serviceman slowly sank forward: with raised hands and mumbling lips--like a praying Moslem.

With a vague idea that he might be able to help someone, he stumbled down the passage. At the corner he heard shouting and dull blows. Quickly he undid a button and put his hand with the gun near his heart. Staggering, a boy in underwear came around the corner: the one who had wanted to join the navy and had been declared unfit because of venereal disease. Three conscripts, among whom the turned-up nose, battered his back with rifle butts. A soldier, the half-naked one, strolled along with his hands in his pockets and a cigarette between his lips.

"Right," he said contentedly, "that's how you take prisoners. Don't ever forget that it is an enemy, a skunk, a reject."

Pressed against the wall, Sander let them pass. It was unnecessary to take action against this. Had he been declared fit, the marine would have belonged to the batterers; syphilis was his only merit. As well as he could, he

soon as possible. Behind all doors were howls of anger and pain. Which building was he in now? Bethlehem? The windows were boarded up, there was electric light. Again steps approached and he looked around, sweating, tears of pain in his eyes. Voices sounded from all sides, but nobody could be seen. Surrounded by the clapping of shoes on marble, he limped to a side-passage. Halfway, it had been knocked out by a direct hit, the rooms to the left and right had been torn open, clouds floated in a big hole in the roof. He kicked off his shoes and rocked on a board over the chaos of stones, chalk, reeds and splintered wood deep down.

As he walked on between the white walls in his dirty uniform, he started to pant for fear. If only he knew where he was! Suddenly ~~there~~ were thick carpets on the floor and cologne pervaded the air; all at once everything was neat and there was no more shouting. Suspicious, he slowed down. It was pleasant here--a different world. He heard soft music and inched into a high gallery which had five or six passages opening into it. A low, eighteenth-century table, a lavish piece of art, covered with crystal, fruit and wine, stood in the middle on Persian rugs, surrounded by settees; through the roof, which was made of stained glass in tender colours, a soft light shone in. Then there was vomit in his mouth and he stood shivering behind a pillar. At a metre's distance, on a couch on the other side, a colonel was sitting with his back to him, and on his lap was a general: in full regalia, a red-rimmed hat on his head, and he giggled as he let himself be stroked by the colonel. A little later two lieutenant-colonels appeared from one of the passages, holding each other by the waist, and one of the lieutenant-colonels had no pants on, but did have high riding boots. peacefully, chattering quietly, they strolled through the

the opposite passage. His eyes half-closed in his misery, Sander looked out the window. And there were the caverns and terrains of the practical examination. Through the leaves of a row of sycamores, he looked on an endless fairground. Tanks and cannons were driving through the swarming soldiers and conscripts; some, who didn't jump aside fast enough, were crushed. A painted manoeuvre-house was burning, but from a window an old woman held out her arms, and conscripts were spraying not water but more flames from their hoses into the house in long, thundering squirts full of black smoke.

"Hihihi," the general giggled. "Silly girl."

For one second Sander saw Piet Waal tied to a post and boys who bombarded him with hand-grenades--then he burst apart like a jigsaw puzzle. On a big merry-go-round conscripts were being flung around, so fast, that they zoomed through the air horizontally and their brains slowly slid to their shoes. From the woods on the horizon a wagon on rails would screech towards them every once in a while, carrying a conscript with his eyelids turned inside out, his mouth torn open and cheeks resembling children's balloons. Others were being fired off with catapults into the woods, where artillery boomed--and then Sander saw his mother. She laughed coquettishly and was wearing her green kimono, which she always wore in the morning, but without colour, black and white, and she was standing in a row of mothers and the sons were shooting at them with heavy machineguns. He still saw how Kees Ankersmit's photograph was the first to fly up into a thousand shreds, how all the photographs became transparent and disappeared, except the one of his own mother, who, all alone, kept smiling coquettishly--then he ran.

Not thinking of the driving general officers, not feeling the fog, he ran.

roof garden with walls of roses and lilacs, through sun lounges, halls, rooms, corridors, and then he stood at the marble stairway, the whale's mouth with the beheaded caryatids. He stumbled down the stairs and passed the storage room. He didn't see the old corporal, everybody was probably outside now: no, not everybody. From the doorway to the nuclear cellar, the soldier with the plastic nose appeared and put a new silhouette in the passage. Sander slowed down and, in order to be inconspicuous, he started to swear and talk dirty. "Goddamned bastards," he mumbled, just audibly. "Shitheads. Crapcocks. Filthy turds." The soldier gave a friendly nod, but then Sander saw, he didn't know what made him see it, but he saw it with unshakable certainty, he saw that it was the heroic, suffering shadow of Hein Ankersmit which was being put against the wall. He ran. --Would we have become God? he started to conjugate again, without speaking. --Would you have become God? Would they have become God? Blood and vomit in his mouth, at the end of his strength, he came into the little hall of Sarepta. Between the gypsum pillars and the gilded angels, Quiff had been chained to the wall, his hair on his forehead, his eyes sealed with bandaid. His uniform soaked with blood, he called: "Hostis habet muros!"--and through that Bandaid shouted from the oaken stairway: "Fall in!"--and five other conscripts lined up and shouldered their rifles in order to become proficient in the art of executing. When the shots rang out, Sander was already outside.

Weeping, he walked across the courtyard. They could still do as they pleased--but the last word would be his! He had a deferment for an undetermined period of time; he would manage to use it for new, unknown conjugations of his verb. Behind him came the sound of quick footsteps, but he

the gate.

"I'll help you, Broodman."

Quickly he turned around and looked into the barrel of a carbine, behind it the sergeant, behind him the buildings on the deserted courtyard, behind them waving trees, clouds and wind.

"I'll make it easy for you and..."

"No!" shouted Sander and walked towards him with his arms spread out. "I am..."

The bullet whizzed past his ear before he even heard the shot. One moment he had seen the sergeant doubt, then he saw the tenseness appear around his mouth. Suddenly he felt the gun in his right hand and he was shooting before he had even aimed and was still shooting, his eyes wide open, when the sergeant was already lying with his black face on top of his carbine. The gun started to misfire and he put it back in his uniform. He took the carbine under his arm and, walking backwards, dragged the heavy body over the tiles. He didn't look around, not even when he reached the narrow passage between the last two buildings, taking short steps. As if he were doing it for the thousandth time, he added the sergeant to the row of soldiers already lying there. He flung the carbine into the gutter, failing the first time.

He had to knock on the door of the sentry box to get the soldier, who was grinning over his comic book, to come out. After a quick glance at the form he opened the gate.

As soon as the gate slammed shut behind him, Sander threw the revolver into the grass and buttoned up his battledress. It had become cooler. In doubt,

he stopped near the highway and wondered which way he should go. He

that came along.

He stood on the white line in his stockinged feet and waited. The sky had clouded over and it was raining a little. The sergeant was quietly lying in rank now, saluting death. I am justified in pardoning myself, Sander thought, it was an aftermath. He looked up and felt the rain touching his face. Goodbye Ena, he thought, I am defeated and have won. Nobody can undo it. It had only an inside; I made it an outside. It is gone, it is everywhere...

His legs gave way and he sank to his knees. He looked down the concrete strip. The first car couldn't be long now. He was still wearing his uniform: he would probably be picked up right away.

January, 1953.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

This section of the thesis wants to give some general insights into the strategies employed during the process of translating, and into the attitudes displayed before and during this process. In discussing these, the study wants to adopt a descriptive, rather than a normative, prescriptive approach, in keeping with the recent changes brought to translation theory by the Poly System theory of Even-Zohar. Thus, practical case-studies such as Ria Vanderauwera's Fiction in Translation were found to be more useful than studies of a more theoretical nature, or those by authors adopting a normative approach, like Peter Newmark.²⁵

Translating a work by Harry Mulisch is an ambitious undertaking for a novice-translator, as I found when I first tried my hand at a story of Mulisch. The language employed in his works is characterized by complexities and subtleties, which are sometimes hard to grasp even for a native speaker of Dutch. The vocabulary is semantically highly loaded. Interliterary references are very common, unusual metaphors abound, many words carry extracontextual meanings contributing to an underlying theme or a metaphor carried to its extreme. Some of these textual elements will be discussed in "Shifts in the Target Text."

With regard to the identification of these highly complex stylistic elements, having the source language as my first language was a definite advantage during the interpretation-phase of the translation. Generally,

²⁵ Fiction in Translation: Policies and Options, a Case Study of the Translation of Dutch Novels into English over the Last Two Decades, Diss. U Antwerpen, 1982 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1986, 9270055) and Newmark, P. Approaches to Translation (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981).

however, being a native speaker of the source language is considered to be a disadvantage. Most translation theorists are in agreement about the fact that a translator should be a native speaker of the target language. This is often considered a point no longer worthy of discussion. Newmark only makes casual mention once of the fact that the target language "should be [the translator's] own" (Approaches to Translation, 6). The main reason to support this view is that the translator should be a good and creative writer in the target language to be able to produce a readable target text. This is a valid point, and, therefore, a translator with a target language other than his own should always use an editor. This is not only necessary to monitor the translator's competency in the target language--indeed, as Helen Wolff states, an editor is generally of use even for translators who are native speakers of English.²⁶

The reasons for attempting a translation into a language other than my own were of a practical nature related to this study. However, in the process of translating I have encountered no great difficulties; in fact I often felt confident during the initial stages of comprehension, interpretation and cognitive translation, especially in assessing the intensity, register and the emotive function of some words and phrases. The production of a target text was not a problem, but the editors were helpful in judging the fluidity and expressive quality of some parts of the target text.

The editing did not have any great impact on the intended target text, but rather a "polishing" of the style by changing inappropriate vocabulary in some places (sometimes replacing a British term by one more "mid-Atlantic") and an awareness of both first language interference--which turned out to be

in lexicon, which makes one-to-one translation feasible in many places--and of the impact of certain strategies employed in the production of the target text were the result. These will be outlined below. The conclusion reached during this process was that having the source language as a native language is not a major handicap for a translator--as long as an editor is available--since one can be aided with production of a target text, but never with the comprehension of the source text.

In producing a translation, one should first regard the audience for which the translation is meant, not only to decide on the usage of British versus American English (which for many professional literary translators is the only criterium by which to judge the target audience), but also to decide on the type of target text to be produced. Newmark gives two options: a communicative or a semantic translation, defining the first as "an attempt to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original" and intending with a semantic translation a translation which attempts "to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original" (Newmark, 39). But no translation can be either one or the other throughout. The decision has to be made for each sentence or even word.

Every translation, therefore, is a compromise between the two extremes of "literal" translation, or maximum adherence to the source-text, and "free" translation, or maximum accommodation of perceived tastes and preferences of the target pole. Newmark gives as the first of his "rules" for a successful translation: "The translation should be as literal as possible and as free as is necessary, the unit of translation should be as small as possible" (Newmark

source text is "possible" and where free target prose is "necessary". Vanderauwera's research on translations of Dutch fiction into English published between 1960 and 1980 has found

a basic translational stance responsible for the textual shape of most translations of Dutch fiction over the last two decades: a pragmatic compromise between adherence to the source text on the one hand, and readability or normality on the other, or a basic respect for the source text--its meaning, progression, general arrangement and even sentence units--kept in check and 'corrected' by a sense of fluency, coherence and modernity, acceptable dialogue and proper punctuation especially, and by a modest tendency not to strain the audience's (low) tolerance or one's own time and creativity with overly daring narrative modes, imagery or choice of words, or with alien socio-cultural data (Fiction in Translation, 203-04).

The purpose of the target text is a second factor to take into consideration, not only for deciding on translation strategies, but also for the selection of the source text. Ria Vanderauwera distinguishes between a metaliterary translation, which is made to fill an ambassadorial function and a target accommodating translation, which is consumer-oriented (Fiction in Translation, 64). These two are often combined, but the presentation of a metaliterary translation is often different: rather than emphasizing content (sexually explicit scenes etc.) it will emphasize the qualities and fame of the author.

The translation of "Keuring" as it is presented here is a compromise obviously leaning to more strict adherence to the source text than would be advisable in a translation to be presented for general publication. The purpose of this translation is a metaliterary one: the presentation of a story by an already translated Dutch author which reinforces many of his ideas and themes; the translation aims at a greater recognition of the qualities of Mulisch as a writer in the Anglophone pole than is currently the case, and hopes to add to the attention paid to him by scholars and critics.

As stated above, the reason for choosing a compromise is the perceived

audience; in this case a small circle of academic readers with a wider than usual experience in reading translations and therefore a greater tolerance for unusual prose. Despite this perceived lack of a need to produce "easy" reading, quite a few shifts between source and target text still take place due to the great difference in poetics between source and target pole. Although it is impossible to discuss all occurring shifts, many are mentioned to illustrate some options and strategies (Newmark refers to them as procedures, see Newmark: 30-32) available to the translator.

Ria Vanderauwera outlines the difference in poetics between the Dutch and the Anglophone pole as follows

crafted and artistic prose is less popular at the target pole than it is at the source pole, [...] the former (the American side especially) exhibits a bias for 'factual' fiction, round characters, and socio-political themes, as opposed to the more suggestive, abstract and solipsistic bend in the source pole" (Fiction in Translation, 33).

Therefore, necessary shifts in the target text include "corrections of logic, standardization, explicitation, [and] suppression of superfluous fragments" (Fiction in Translation, 128). In this target text, however, these shifts have been kept to an absolute minimum, since, as will be indicated below, Mulisch's style would suffer from any such standardization, because its exclusiveness is based exactly on not conforming to the conventional.

SHIFTS IN THE TARGET TEXT

Apart from the difference in poetics between the source and target pole discussed above a translator has to deal with the huge cultural differences which cause the different poetics. Cultural differences cause semantic voids which are among the most difficult to fill, as Menachem Dagut exemplified.²⁷ In translating "Inspection" this problem created some difficulties.

The shifts start with the title, which, as stated above, means both "inspection," as in "the car was inspected for mechanical problems" and "medical examination" or "physical" as in "he had his annual physical." However, generally, especially among younger males, "keuring" is linked to military service, and in 1955, shortly after the war in Indonesia, during the actions in New-Guinea, likely had negative connotations. Military service in Holland is obligatory and demands total obedience in carrying out mindless activities. In 1953 a young man would have been drafted for two years. Avoiding military service in 1953 could not be done other than by getting declared medically unfit, or emotionally unbalanced, or by getting married. A reference to this is found in the story: the chaplain hears the conscripts talk about sex and warns them: "'Sexual intercourse before marriage--you know the story on that, don't you boys?'" (50). His assumption that all of them are not married is logical. The translation of the title as "Inspection" carries both the military and the medical connotations.

Other semantic shifts due to cultural differences are the interliterary allusions. There are two direct quotations, the first from Van Deyssel's essay

²⁷ See "Semantic voids as a Problem in the Translation Process," Poetics Today 2.4 (1981): 61-71.

on the state of Dutch art in the 19th century (41).²⁸ The quotation has been translated by linguistic equivalents, which results in an admittedly "awkward" English sentence. Since fluidity of the target text was not the primary aim, a footnote was added to ascertain at least some communicative equivalence. The second quotation is from a very famous Dutch poem by Jacques Perk, based on, but not a translation of, Shelley's poem "The Cloud" (49). This has been replaced by the original English poem, rather than an introduction into the target text of a translation of the Dutch which would carry no reference to the familiar poem. The English poem is very close to the Dutch in metre, rhyme and idea. A footnote here was added only to introduce Perk to the target audience.

Considering the great thematic similarity between Mulisch's works, it should not be surprising that this similarity exists on a textual level as well. There are references to Voer voor Psychologen, and one of these literary allusions creates a problem in the target text. The sentence "and a stick which slid across a shiny map in a classroom filled with the light of winter and boys, the airplane nose down in the clouds" (61) is a scene from Mulisch's own youth--where, after one of his infrequent visits to school, Mulisch witnesses the fall of an English fighter plane over Haarlem--which will be understandable only to the readers of his later work. Similarly the sentence "Sander felt the bitter water in his mouth" (34) is echoed in The Stone Bridal Bed: "water ran in his mouth" (The Stone Bridal Bed, 29). "Mouth" here is a modulation of the Dutch, which reads "throat." The frequent occurrences of textual allusions in

²⁸ Ironically, his conclusion that Holland must be pushed up into the momentum of the nations, infers that more literature should be translated. The reality of the market indicates that in the late 20th century still very little is being translated into English.

The Stone Bridal Bed to this story lend to the suggestion that "Inspection" is the basis for the ideas in the novel, and that Sander Broodman is the Norman Corinth to be. To mention just a few of the similar motifs: the sexual theme is again linked with destruction, love with war; both Sander and Corinth end up out of control: Corinth hits his friend, Sander shoots the sergeant. Similarly, the sentence "I am justified in pardoning myself, Sander thought, it was an aftermath" (86) is a precursor of the beginning of the second episode of The Assault: "All the rest is a postscript--the cloud of ash that rises from the volcano, circles around the earth, and continues to rain down on all its continents for years." The Dutch words are even more similar: "nasleep" is turned into "naspel", both have a meaning equivalent to "aftermath" or "after-effect".

Another semantic shift based on cultural differences is the use of the "police van" (32) to pick up the conscripts. Although the source text also fails to mention that it concerns military police, this does not result in ambiguity for the source text reader; the target reader might be confused about the connection between the military and the police force in Holland, however. A satisfying communicative equivalent could not be found.

The source text contains some more ambiguities on a linguistic level, which have not been explicated. There are frequently sentences with "he" as either subject or object (sometimes both) where the antecedent is not immediately clear. An example is "From below he looked at him, panting, sweat over his face" (36). Generally this ambiguity has been transferred to the target text. To avoid some confusion, the references to the little boy (63-74) have been translated by "it", the grammatically correct reference in the source text; in the target text, although not completely grammatical, this translation was

nevertheless acceptable to the editors. Transferring the ambiguity was not possible in the case of the linguistic void of the Dutch greeting "dag", which can mean both "hello", "good day" or "goodbye". Modulation resulted in "Hello father, hello mother..." (60), but only as the result of interpretation of the context.

Some ambiguities occur in the target text, while not occurring in the source text. An example is the following sentence: "Beside these idiots he noticed a boy in a loud tie: he had styled his black hair into one single towering wave, in such a way that nothing had been left on the back of his head" (33). "Beside" is an ambiguous translation of "behalve" which means "except": here "beside" can also be a preposition of place, which is not the case in the source text.

Some loss of semantic content also occurred in the names. The two nicknames "Bandaïd" and "Quiff" have been translated. Bandaïd reflects the Dutch "Pleister", for which "Plaster" would have been a more appropriate translation, were it not so British. To a North American reader, the medical application would be lost. Quiff, although British, was chosen over "Coif" as a linguistic equivalent to the Dutch "Kuif" and for its phonetic qualities. The other names were left untranslated. Sander is short for Alexander, and resembles "salamander", which phonetic resemblance is not lost in the translation. Broodman, literally "Breadman", carries an echo of a famous literary character of Multatuli called "Sjaalman", translated as "Scarfman".²⁹ This echo is substantiated in Sander's contemplation of the ant: "He looked at an ant, which struggled through the forest of grass, the endless wilderness"

²⁹ Multatuli, Max Havelaar or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company, trans. Roy Edwards, (London: Heinemann, 1967).

(64); in Multatuli's work the ant, struggling, carrying an enormous load, falling and starting again, is a metaphor for the plight of the Indonesian people, particularly in Java. A further reference to the actions of the Dutch in Indonesia is in the rote learning of the islands in Sander's flashback: "Java, Sander thought--Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Halmahera... " (61). Such vague interliterary allusions can not be transferred and were left untranslated.

In order to be consistent, Quiff's name, Brands, was not translated into the linguistic equivalent Burns, although an acceptable name--perhaps carrying unwanted reference to a wayward Scot. The Ankersmits' name would be "Anchorsmith" in a one-to-one translation, but the phonetic quality of the Dutch name is such that its connotations are rendered to the target reader in pronouncing it. Nor were any of the other last names mentioned by the sergeant translated; place names were similarly left untranslated. No note on pronunciation was added, as was frequently done some years ago: this practice seems to have been dispensed with, and justly so. Nor have I followed Roy Edwards's example, who phonetically transcribes the Dutch names in "What happened to Sergeant Masuro?", which enables the target reader to read and pronounce the names without difficulty. This is a very acceptable practice: Elsemoor and Persin closely resemble the Dutch names Elzemoer and Persijn. Unfortunately, this strategy was not applicable in the list of names present in this story.

Stylistic features were also problematic in the translating. As we have seen above, the target pole dislikes unfamiliar, unconventional prose: Mulisch, however, uses frequent alliteration, highly unusual metaphor and unconventional punctuation.

Many of the alliterations in the source text could not be translated, so were rendered by compensation in the target text. The sentence "Did ever the plumed minstrels in the four weeping willows warble more peacefully?" (31) tries to effectively replace an alliteration with the letter *v* occurring three times in the same sentence, but including the "plumed minstrels" instead of the "willows". Similarly the "s" alliteration in "Shooting and shouting sounded from the areas behind the buildings; also a screeching sound, as if something were speeding over rails" (37) replaces a sentence with 7 words containing the letter "g" in the source text. One-to-one translation was possible for some alliterations: "swaggering soldiers" (40) replaces a similar alliteration in Dutch, as does "slanting shadow" (58). A less successful compensation was placed in "The twins had to contend with inadequately cut flies and had to pull their pants to the side in order to keep their privates hidden from view" (41). The original alliteration "gebrekkig gesneden gulpen" could not be translated as such and the three "p's" in the latter part of the target sentence do not adequately convey the distaste evident in the original repetition of gutturals.

Because, as mentioned above, Mulisch's language is very stylized, and structurally complicated, the main shifts in the texts occur in the imagery and metaphors. Peter Newman asserts that "assuming that a creative metaphor is worth translating, there is no question that the more original and surprising it is [...], the easier it will be to translate" (Newman, 49). However, the metaphors Mulisch uses are too unusual and rely too much on the reader's knowledge of his thematic ideas to be easily acceptable to the target pole and thus created problems in the translating. "With his amazement increasing by the second, he looked at the apparition" (30) is but a weak substitute for the original "In an amazement, steeper from second to second, he looked at the

apparition from tip to toe." The adjective "steep", although also highly original in Dutch, is unacceptable in English. The phrase "from tip to toe" has some degree of source language interference, and was therefore left out because the following sentence makes it clear. Several such shifts occur in the target text, although most of the original metaphor is maintained. Cause for comment by the editors, yet maintained were the following images:

--"It seemed as if he was devouring his laughter" (36).

--"With dripping runners it sank down the walls and enclosed them in a wide embrace" (46).

--"The cubicle was piled full of coughing and throat-clearing, one after the other they slipped to the floor" (46).

--"Below the gate, their moans hung like an elephant" (58), a very unusual metaphor in the source text, has to be maintained for its connotations of eternity and stone age.

--"[...] innocent back to their origin, the birds and bees were singing in the foliage and the flowers, flies were dancing in slanting pillars of sunlight" translates an equal reversal in the source text, at the same time trying to compensate for an alliteration of "b's" in the source text by a double alliteration of "b" and "fl".

--"[...] the sun which revolved in the blue like a man who likes to forget himself" (62) is a one-to-one translation, and in the same paragraph "digestion", although vague, has to be maintained as one more reference to Mulisch's idea about the interrelationship of all works in a writer's oeuvre: "the oeuvre of a writer is [...] one big organism [...] if one touches it somewhere, it reacts somewhere else; a colossal circulation is going on inside it, and an all-encompassing digestion" (Voer voor Psychologen, 108). The word is crucial to the

interpretation of Sander as the creator of his own reality.

During the editing, the unacceptability of stylized prose and unconventional narrative to the target pole, as indicated by Vanderauwera above, became evident. The following examples of explicitation, change in intensity and vocabulary should show some shifts in the target text resulting from the editors' comments. The explicitation "the subject of this discourse" was added to replace "about whom this discourse", which without a verb is too unconventional. "Then someone grabbed him and fingers opened his eyes forcefully, so wide, that they nearly fell out" (44) was changed from: "that they had to fall out," which in Dutch has the same intensity as in English. "Instrument panel" (55) replaces the less familiar "armamentarium".

The standardization of the punctuation was another result of the editing. The source text makes abundant use of the dash [--] and the comma, to such an extent that it could be criticized. At the beginning of a sentence of direct speech, the dashes have been maintained. To the anglophone reader, the dash is unacceptable at the end of a sentence, where it was changed to ellipses, as in the following example: "Actually, I've dealt with it already, but these dreams..." (74). Commas before dashes were deleted, as were many commas separating antecedent and subordinated clause. In one instance, the tense was standardized

Maybe it would presently burst open like a wall, the cardboard trees would bang to the ground and from an immense complex of wheels and steel, fire would shoot towards them in a murdering judgment, airplanes sweep over them amidst flames, bullets and rockets, the sky become a chaos of scrap, the sun fall to the earth and an atomic fungus appear monumentally where only their shadows remained intact (65-66).

The source text alternated real and unreal conditional, which is ungrammatical in the target language. Other standardizations of grammar did not take place.

Another normalization was the capitalization of "christianity", which was not capitalized in the source text, although it generally is in Dutch.

Some explicitation of vocabulary was necessary because the linguistic equivalent was unacceptable, as in "Then she'd push me around in a wheelchair" (75), where the one-to-one translation would have been "wagon" with a diminutive. "Wheelchair" is the equivalent of "rolstoel" and more specific than the "wagentje" of the source text. Diminutives, used extensively in Dutch, created the main problem of inequivalency. In the "little boy" it has been translated by a definition, and related to the little boy sometimes a more expressive description occurred as in "and tried to squeeze his hands into the tiny pockets of its shorts" (67), but frequently the same is lost, as in the endearing term "liefje", translated by "sweetheart" (70). Swearwords were a problem which was quite challenging. One-to-one translation proved quite adequate, but friends enjoyed trying to find more familiar equivalents.

Although ~~this~~ partial list of shifts seems quite long, the number of voluntary shifts to create a more target accommodating text were relatively small. In the next chapter, further revisions, requiring greater deviation from the source text than was justified for the purpose of this translation will be explored.

ADAPTATIONS FOR A TARGET ACCOMMODATING TRANSLATION

The comparison of the target pole and the source pole carried out by Ria Vanderauwera have confirmed my ideas about the acceptability of translated Dutch prose to an English-speaking audience. The adjectives "stilted", "stiff", "bookish", "artificial", "pompous" and "heavy" characterize a lot of critical reviews of literary translations from the Dutch (Vanderauwera, 191-92). Largely unacceptable to the target pole are the pessimistic mood in many Dutch novels, the theme of "puppy-love", the provinciality (which is not present in Mulisch's work), the absence of humour and the often thin plots and mannered prose.

Except for the provincial theme, all of the above characterize Mulisch's fiction. Although archibald strohalm asserts "that nowadays the right way is laughter" (archibald strohalm, 23), laughter is frequently not an indication of humour and often real-humour is absent in Mulisch's works. H. A. Gomperts asserts that "humour is a problem for Mulisch" and "the way of laughter frequently remains an empty formula" (Dütting, 26-27). In The Stone Bridal Bed, the word "laughter" occurs 147 times, but not often do the characters laugh about something that is really funny. The same goes for "Inspection": of the 33 times that laughter is mentioned, only very few laughs are spontaneous outbursts of mirth. Mainly the laughter is an indication of malicious delight or of some pain: "you kill yourself laughing, you think you'll go crazy" (48) is the rationale behind many of the laughs that occur in Mulisch's works.

Despite this fact, translations of Mulisch's works were generally well-received, the exception being the novel Two Women, which was sloppily edited and contained quite a few mistakes, and thanked its good sales to its theme,

which was exploited in the presentation in order to attract audience. Because the reviews of the three translated novels are the only critical attention bestowed on Mulisch, it is worthwhile to discuss them a little, which will hopefully make the point clear that more critical work needs to be done on the works of this excellent author.

The Stone Bridal Bed, an excellent translation, was reviewed positively as a novel to prove that the novel as an artform was not dead. It did not have a whole review dedicated to it, however. Praised were its "thoughtfulness" and "austere vision". Regarding the fact that it is a translation, Roger Sale says: "The Stone Bridal Bed, thus, is that rare thing, a quotable foreign novel."³⁰ This gives us some indication of the problems foreign novels face in a large target pole. Two Women was more widely reviewed, and there were several reviews of this novel by itself. The risqué subject matter, the exploration of this theme by a male writer and the realism in the story were praised. The unidiomatic translation, the temporal complexity and its "cerebral" quality were negatively reviewed. Reviewers of both novels did not refer to other works by the same author, nor did they explore the thematic implications.

Finally, The Assault was reviewed by more well-known-writers such as Stephen Spender and John Updike. Once again, the plot and theme are favourably discussed, the novel is praised for its thoughtfulness and for being "well worked out". Harold Beaver mentions Mulisch's "X-ray cunning", a very apt term.³¹ Negative aspects include the idea that Mulisch's larger themes are too large for the book, metaphors that are "too apt" (confirming Vanderau-

³⁰ "The Newness of the novel," Hudson Review 16 (1963): 603.

³¹ "A Corpse at the Doorstep," New York Times Book Review 16 June 1985: 7.

wera's statement that mannered prose is not appreciated in the target pole); generally, however, the enthusiasm for the book precluded too much criticism. The quality of the translation is not commented on, except by Beaver, who finds it "readably though sometimes awkwardly translated."

All factors mentioned in these reviews will have to be considered, before another story by Mulisch can be submitted for publication for an Anglophone audience. Although after the success of the film based on the novel The Assault there might be some interest, the market for translated literature is very small. Several shifts will have to take place to make the target text more accommodating for target poetics.

Before a publication can be considered, the translator should try to get the cooperation of the author, as Helen Wolff states, especially since this text is very complex ("Translation and the Editor," 164). This would be especially useful for the recognition of possibly more literary allusions, the significance of the word "Sarepta" (a Russian town famous for its mustard, possibly inserted for its allusion to the "mustard-gas" used in the first world war, which would be another parallel with one of the tests the conscripts undergo) and the phrase "Yehe Aur" used by Sander during the pivotal point in the story. However, these added interpretational factors would probably not change the target text significantly. Although generally foreign words are often translated into English along with the source language, to enhance the "easy reading" quality of a translated work, the foreign words in this text are equally mystifying to a Dutch as to an Anglophone audience and should be left untranslated.

Footnotes, which could aid interpretation of these foreign words, should not be included in a target-accommodating publication, since they interfere

with "easy" reading. Therefore, in other instances where footnotes might be needed, greater care should be taken to include explications without destroying equivalence. The footnotes added to this target text, therefore, will have to be deleted. For the second literary allusion this would present no great loss of meaning. It is a happy coincidence that Jacques Perk based his poem on one of Shelley's poems, and by "translating back" to the original poem the poetic content would be maintained. The first note does present a problem: neither editor who reviewed the target text could accept the sentence "His hair was impeccable again, pushed up into the momentum of the nations" (41) without an explanatory note. This allusion would be lost because the target text here has to be normalized. A short introduction mentioning such shifts which result in a loss of meaning might solve this dilemma. The third footnote can be left out: despite Newmark's assertion otherwise, Vanderauwera has shown that translators generally do correct the source text without indicating this (cf. Fiction in Translation, 69).

Apart from a more rigorous standardization of the punctuation (dashes at the beginning of direct speech would be deleted, capitalization of "god in heaven" (71) would be introduced, the use of commas, colons and semicolons changed to be more consistent, etc.), more explication would be necessary with regard to the ambiguities still existing in the target text as mentioned earlier. The frequent occurrence of a "he" as both subject and object in the same sentence would have to be eliminated and the antecedents qualified. Especially in the scene with the little boy (who could, in a normalized target text, no longer be referred to as "it") names would have to be introduced. Thus the sentences

The latter grabbed the little boy who sat looking around, panting and speechless, and tried to squeeze his hands into the little pockets

of his shorts. [...] He let his hands go over his whole body. (67)
 (in which "the latter" is already a linguistic shift from "this person" which is unacceptable in English) would have to be modified.

Vocabulary changes would also take place, and the target text in general would have to be more idiomatic. This should include the changing of some adjectives, for example "paintless" (43) to "unpainted" and "upright" to the more expressive "bolt upright". More of the adverbs would be changed to render a slightly more expressive target text in order to avoid the "bookish" quality of some sentences. Adaptation of the most unusual metaphors would also be necessary: "Below the gate, their moans hung like an elephant" (58) would have to become something like "As they passed under the gate, their moans sounded like those of the elephants in a circus."

Anglicizing the names of the characters would result in Sander Brodmann, Quiff Burns, Harry Ankersmit, and the lists of the sergeant would become Van Hallem, Kassel, Yonge, whereas the more unusual names like De Groot, Hagedoorn and Van Waveren ten Cate might have to be replaced by more easily pronounceable names. The names of localities as in "Was this a respected officer of the Dutch armed forces? An office clerk from Schoonhoven? A farmer's son from Drente?" (30) would have to be changed into more familiar places, which would also render some of the idea of the incredible, boring respectability which is evoked by the source text here.

One can unfortunately not help the lack of humour in Mulisch's work--this story does not reach the ironic, self-mocking tone of later works--the swearwords of the soldiers and the mocking tone of the sergeant could possibly be rendered even more lavishly to provide some relief from the tension built up in this story. Inserting some more expressive equivalents might

compensate for the subtle humour present in the language and tone of all Mulisch's works.

The short introduction to the story mentioned above should also capitalize on the fact that two of Mulisch's novels have been made into films, the latter of which, "The Assault", had a modest success in North America, and on the links between Mulisch's works and those of famous Anglophone writers like Stephen Spender, Norman Mailer and Kurt Vonnegut.

EPILOGUE

The reviews of Mulisch's three novels which have been translated into English, The Stone Bridal Bed, Two Women and The Assault constitute the bulk of critical attention by anglophone scholars and critics which Mulisch has received in the 35 years he has been publishing excellent work. In the Netherlands he has received much critical acclaim. In section three of the "Translator's Notes" I have indicated some reasons why Mulisch is "hard to digest" for the Anglophone readers. He is not part of the select group of Dutch writers who accommodate the Anglophone taste, as it is represented by Vanderauwera. Nevertheless, I hope that this translation, as well as the other translations, serve to make this target audience more acquainted with the writer, and, ultimately, will be part of many other translations of "classic" Dutch fiction, which will hopefully help to change the rather one-sided opinion of translations generally held, and serve to increase the amount of critical attention paid to Dutch literature.

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APPENDIX 2

This appendix (pp. 115-123) consists of a translation of "Harry Mulisch / Tijdtafel" [Harry Mulisch / Chronology] from Dütting, Hans, ed., Kritisch Nabeeld (Baarn: Ambo, 1982): 10-16. It has been removed because of unavailability of copyright.



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Amsterdam, 4 november 1987

Geachte Mevrouw Hoogenboom,

In antwoord op uw brief d.d. 11 oktober jl. deel ik u mede dat er, voor zover bekend, niet eerder een Engelse vertaling is gemaakt van DE VERSIERDE MENS van Harry Mulisch.

Wij verlenen u hierbij toestemming om voor studie-doeleinden een vertaling te maken van dit werk. Echter, deze vertaling mag nimmer gebruikt worden voor andere doeleinden zonder onze instemming of goedkeuring.

Met vriendelijke groeten,
hoogachtend,
DE BEZIGE BIJ

Heleen van Wijk
Heleen van Wijk